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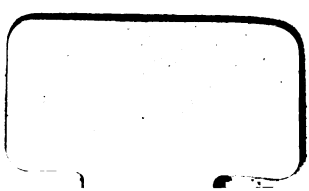
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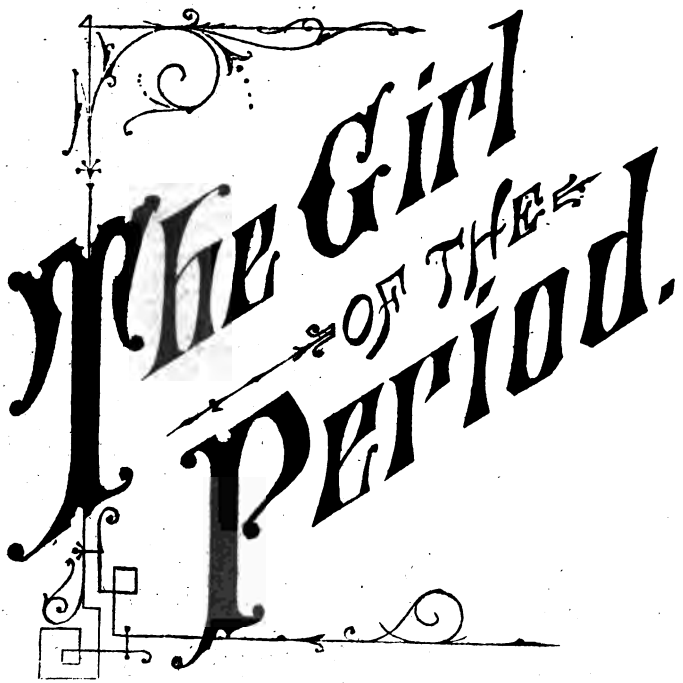
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PRICE, FIFTY CENTS.

THE AMERICAN

GIRL OF THE PERIOD:

HER WAYS AND VIEWS.

BY

GARRY GAINES.

"Some odds and ends,
With homely truths too trite to be sublime,
And many a moral scattered here and there,—
Not very new, nor yet the worse for wear."

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1878.

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TO

THOMAS HUBBARD, ESQ.,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED,

AS AN INADEQUATE EXPRESSION OF RESPECT AND ESTEEM.

PREFACE.

THERE is no end of books, it is true; but neither is there any end of the readers of books, and it is probably safe to infer that so long as there are new ideas and ambitions, and new fields of usefulness and endeavor, so long there will be new books.

This volume is presented to the public, as others have been before, and as still others will be hereafter, upon the assumption that there is a need for it,—a mission of usefulness unsupplied. The truth or falsity of these assumptions must in each case be determined by time and the test of the public judgment. It is certainly true of this book, that it is the representative of a good motive, and that it carries with it, not only a desire for the success which consists in public approbation, but an earnest hope, as well, for that higher success which is measured by results of public good. Its aim, in brief, is to correct, in some degree


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The Girl of the Period.

PRICE, FIFTY CENTS.

couldn't dress better than they do. This is the second season Kate Smith has worn that black mohair, and anybody can see it's as old as the hills; and that hat Flora has on,—oh, dear! did anybody ever? I'll bet she trimmed it herself, for she's got that rose stuck on the front instead of the back, where it should be. And there's Mary Dean, with her everlasting old green silk on; I wish somebody would present her with another, for I'm sick and tired of seeing it. It has been ripped up and turned half a dozen times to my certain knowledge, and yet she hangs on to it. I wonder she didn't cut that flounce bias and put a velvet heading on it! And then she *will* persist in wearing her hair so ugly and plain,—not a crimp or a frizz about it. She says the present style is not becoming to her; but what of that? It's not becoming to one in a hundred; but one might as well be dead as out of the fashion. She certainly ought to dress better than she does, for she gives music-lessons; but they say she is such a greeny that she helps support the family with her earnings. How sweet that lace is on Mrs. Smart's polonaise! It must be *so* nice to have plenty of money and dress as elegantly as she does,—she must be perfectly happy.

I declare, if Jenny Jones isn't still wearing that same cloth sacque she got a year ago! Goodness! if my father was as rich as old Jones, you wouldn't catch me looking the way she does. I'd have a new

outfit every month in the year, and if he was too stingy to give me the money I'd run him in debt all over town; but the Jones girls are *so* odd, they don't seem to care a straw about dress. And that bonnet their mother wears! It looks as if old Mrs. Noah had owned it when she lived in the ark.

Oh, good! the choir are going to sing now. I hope they'll sing something pretty; but if they do pa will growl, as he did the last time they sang "When the swallows are returning." He says such church music is too operatic and hifalutin' for old people; that he don't believe in the way that latter-day Christians have of praising God by proxy, and having the music furnished by paid artists, and that in the cities they are often people of questionable character who perform this part of the service, and he thinks it is all wrong. He likes "Old Hundred" and "Dundee," and all those horrid old tunes, and wants the congregation to help do the singing; but, thank fortune! the old fogies have had their day, and nobody cares how much they complain.

I do wish that man in front of me would keep his head still,—he keeps it bobbing about so that I can't see whether Miss Brown's ruche is real Valenciennes or only imitation. What a heavenly scarf she has on! I'm bound to have one like it to wear to the dance to-morrow night; and I shan't ask pa, either; I'll just have it charged, and he'll find it out when he comes to settle the bill.

I suppose Mollie Bush imagines that she's cutting quite a dash with her new Irish poplin. What sweet fringe on it! it didn't cost a cent less than two dollars a yard, I'm certain. But with all her fine clothes nobody ever hears of her having a beau; and yet the poor thing seems tolerably contented, too. However, she always was a queer creature, and different from other girls. Humph! there's that largest Stokes girl with a new set of jewelry on. I'd like to know how they paid for it,—everybody knows her father is as poor as Lazarus.

There! I wonder who is that handsome stranger in Mr. Clark's pew? He's *awful* sweet,—has such lovely whiskers, and I'll warrant he's rich, for that's a splendid *solitaire* he has on his little finger. I wish I could manage to get acquainted with him,—he's looking right over this way now,—straight at me, I do believe! I wonder how I look? I'd like to get up a handkerchief flirtation with him, just for the fun of it, if pa wasn't watching. I don't see why he can't settle himself down for a nap during the sermon, as other men do; but asleep or awake he'll manage to keep one eye on me, just as if he was afraid to trust me out of his sight.

Dear me! I'm awful tired sitting here, and I've seen everything there is to be seen. I hope the sermon is nearly finished. I can't see any sense in a man preaching forever; they always seem to forget that there's such a thing as having too much of a good

thing. If he don't quit pretty soon I won't be able to stand it, for my new shoes pinch my feet awfully; besides, I want to get home to finish reading "The Angel Bride," for I've got to the most exciting part now, and I can hardly wait to see how it ends. It is the best book I ever read—the hero is *so* captivating, and the chapter that describes little Nellie's death is so touching. I nearly cried my eyes out over the description, till pa came in and said I would show more feeling by "helping my poor tired mother get dinner than to sit sniffling over a novel." Pa is *so* coarse, and hasn't a bit of sentiment!

I can hardly keep my eyes off of that handsome fellow—he's as pretty as a picture. And what delicate hands he has!—as white as a lady's. *He's* none of your mechanics, I'll bet.

Good! the preacher is through at last, and is going to pronounce the benediction. If I meet Joe Vance on my way home I shall treat him mighty cool: to think of his engaging himself to that quiet, stupid Jenny Jones, when he has been paying such marked attention to me all winter! Pa says a young man is willing to flirt and have a gay time with almost any girl, but when he comes to marry he don't want the girl who is always on the street and throws kisses to strangers, but selects the one who is modest and has domestic virtues and will make his home happy. What stuff!

HER PARTY DRESS.

It is too bad! Here's my best party dress just ruined! Some great clumsy man stepped on the trail with his horrid big feet, and tore it most outrageously. It's enough to provoke a saint to have one's best clothes spoiled by such awkwardness. And it's such a bore when you find your dress is ruined to have to turn round to the hideous creature who tore it, and say sweetly, "Oh, never mind; it makes no difference!" Men seem to think if they say, "Beg your pardon," or make some poor little apology about being sorry for the accident, that it fixes it up all right; just as if *that* would mend your dress. The other night when that old man tramped on this dress at Jones's party, and I heard the stitches go whack! whack! I was mad, you bet; and when he growled out the customary excuse, I just thought killing was too good for him. I know I looked as black as a thunder-cloud at the old scalawag; but of course I had to pretend that it didn't matter at all, though I couldn't help saying to one of the girls, as he turned away, that he was a clumsy old fool; and I do believe he heard me, for he looked back and said that young ladies shouldn't wear such long skirts if

they didn't wish to have them stepped on. "Why don't I make a fuss and scold when Tom Maguire or any of the young fellows tear my dresses?" What an absurd question, child! *Of course* there's a difference; but you are too young to understand, if I were to explain all day. Nobody could be angry with Tom for treading on one's dress, for he always feels *so* badly, and makes such beautiful apologies; and then, you know, young men are not half so clumsy as *old* men. Pa says he hasn't a bit of sympathy for me or any other woman who gets her train torn, for he says no sensible woman will drag two or three yards of goods behind her to be ruined at every step. He thinks it terribly extravagant and silly for women, particularly in these hard times, to put twenty-five or thirty yards of goods in a dress to be lengthened out to form a train, merely to switch over dirty streets and wipe up filthy rubbish and tobacco-spit, especially when there are so many poor, suffering women all over the country, who are actually half naked, with only rags to cover them, and this surplus from the dresses of fashionable women would clothe them respectably.

Did you ever hear of anything so absurd? He has the most old-fogy, antediluvian ideas about women that can be imagined. Thank fortune! ma has some sense left, even if she *has* lived with him for twenty years, and I can generally bring her "round," if I tease right hard.

When I had my grenadine made, I heard those spiteful Smith girls had new dresses that trailed more than any others in town, so I told the dress-maker to make mine *two* inches longer than theirs. I was bound they shouldn't get ahead of me! I wouldn't have pa know I gave such orders, for he claims it is uncleanly and unhealthy for any woman to wear a trail, clinging half the time as it does in a damp mass about her feet; and what satisfaction, he says, is there in walking with a lady whose dress is so long that it keeps a man constantly dodging to keep from treading on it, and if he does tread on it he mortally offends her? But, he says, the most laughable sight is to see a woman give her dress a kick outward and grab it on one side, holding it up high to show her handsome petticoat, while the other side is dragging in the mud. Pooh! what an old goose he is! Would he want us to look like peasant women, with our dresses to our shoe-tops, for the sake of saving a few pennies in dry-goods and doctors' bills?

Of course long dresses are nuisances sometimes, but they are splendid for girls who have big feet; and I acknowledge it does wear dress-skirts out awful fast, for you can't wear them a half-dozen times till they are all frayed at the edges; but, goodness knows! a person has to be in the fashion. When you're in Rome you must do as the Romans do, you know, And I really can't see why men should be always

criticising what women wear: I'm sure we bother ourselves very little about the way their clothes are made. But to be sure it is only the old married men who do make a fuss and act the dunce so; our fellows have more sense: they like to see girls dressed in style; but pa says that's because they don't have to foot the bills for all this finery.

It seems so queer that parents should be so blinded, —they ought to know their daughters will never get married if they don't dress as well as other girls, and if they haven't got the "spondulix" to buy them good clothes, they ought to sell out and quit the "biz."

ON THE STREET.

WHAT a sweet day! Everybody will be out enjoying it, and I'll have plenty of opportunities to show my new jacket. What a nuisance that ma loaned Nell Smith the pattern of it, for if she gets one just like it nobody will know but that she got hers *first;* and that would be so provoking!

I s'pose ma thought I might have stayed and helped with the dinner-dishes, instead of leaving them for her to do; but I told her I wouldn't be gone long,— only to the post-office and back. Of course I'm not expecting letters; but the day is too lovely to stay in

the house; and, besides, I will be sure to meet all the fellows at the post-office. I do wonder how I look? I was in such a hurry to get off that I hardly took time to rub in the lily-white, and I expect it shows fearfully on each side of my nose; and I hope, too, that my dress is all right behind, and not hanging with the fulness all on one side of the tilter, like that girl's over there. Ma says you couldn't induce her to wear one of these long bustles; that a woman always acts as if there was something tied fast near her heels that she was trying to kick away before she can step. I don't believe I like 'em either quite as well as newspapers. The *New York Times* was a splendid paper for that. The *Country Gentleman*, doubled, always made a pannier set beautifully, too, and didn't rustle when you sat down, as the *Cincinnati Gazette* did.

Bother! I wish I could reach my pocket-handkerchief without having to nearly break my back to get at my pocket; these long outside pockets on the back of one's dress, where they are always catching and getting torn, are *bores*, for certain; but, dear me! what's a girl to do? As long as it's the style, just endure it, I suppose.

There! I declare, if I didn't forget to put on my bracelets! That's too bad, for I wanted to show them to Fanny Brown,—it always bores her so when I get anything pretty. There's Susie More crossing the street, dressed fit to kill. Now, don't she think

she's stunning? She has on her new hat, I see. 'Tis right pretty, and quite becoming to her; but, mercy! I wouldn't have her know I thought so for all the world. It would please her too well, and the dear knows she's puffed up enough now with vanity.

How I will flirt past Jones's house! If there are people I detest on the face of the earth, it is old Mrs. Jones and her girls. I expect they will all be seated at the front window as usual, ready to make comments on the people who pass. Oh! the curtain is down, I see; but I shouldn't wonder if the old lady was peeping out at one side,—they are such a jealous, envious set,—provoked at me because I have so many beaux and can enjoy myself. They bother themselves so much about me, too. She told ma the other day that people thought it strange that pa, being such a prominent church-member, should have such a wild girl. Nothing but envy dictated that speech. If her girls wish to stick at home and piece quilts and make tatting, and never have any beaux, I have no objections; but "go it while you're young" is my motto. People have no business to have children if they are not willing to have them enjoy themselves. Pa is extremely aggravating, too, —watches me like a hawk; but I can "come it" over ma almost every time. There! I declare, I've nearly ruined my new gaiters, and my feet are soaking wet, from stepping in that puddle. Ma would say it served me right for not wearing overshoes this bad

weather; but they make one's feet look so big and clumsy that I'd rather have wet feet than wear them.

Oh, my! what a heavenly hat in that show-case! I'll just run in and price it. It would be *so* becoming to me, and I'm bound to have it, if I can get ma to coax pa into it; but he's so mortal stingy since he failed that I hardly dare to ask for anything. When he finds I've been getting things on credit at the stores, I expect he'll be awfully provoked; but it's his own fault: if he'd give me more money to spend I wouldn't have to run up bills. I'd have to dress as old-fashioned and antiquated as they did before the flood, if he had his way. He says the extravagance of the people of this country will be its ruin before many years; but then he only says that to hear himself talk. I'd have a sweet time trying to dress respectably and look like other girls, if I didn't have ma to intercede for me. She's all "O. K." on that score, thank fortune! I'll be sure to get the hat if I take it home and show her how well I look in it, for I can persuade her into anything. Dear me! how uncomfortable I feel; my head fairly aches! I suppose it is because I had my hair braided up so tight last night, to make it frizzy. I do wish the style would go out of fashion, for it's no small job to sit up every night, after your beau has gone and the fire nearly out, to braid your hair in fifty or sixty little braids; besides, ma grumbles so because it takes so much time to unbraid it the next morning. She says that

is the way I get out of all the morning work. Oh! there's Jack Brown on the opposite side of the street. I do wish he'd look this way. I'll have to attract his attention some way,—*Ahem.* There; he hears me; he is crossing over; I knew I could bring him. "Do I want to take a little walk?" Of course I do: which way shall we go? "Do I look uncommonly pretty to-day?" Thank you. I put on my "fix-ups" just for you, Jack. You ought to feel complimented. Where were you this morning? I came up town on purpose to see you,—made an excuse to go to the store for some pins, and had a real nice little flirtation with one of the clerks. He is a "buncom boy." How old Mrs. Jones would raise her eyebrows if she were to hear me using "slang," as she calls it! Oh! Perkins has a new book-keeper,—the sweetest fellow! Do take me in and give me an introduction. All the girls are crazy to get acquainted with him. Bring him up to our house to-night; pa and ma will be gone to prayer-meeting, and we'll invite in some of the girls and have a game of euchre. "Will I go to the dance with you Thursday night?" "You bet" I will. How those people do gape and stare at us as we pass! I'm sure we have only walked up this street four times this afternoon. I suppose they are ill-natured enough to think a girl ought always to stick at home and never show her face. Mrs. Jones told ma, so spitefully, that the men made remarks about girls who were always on the street. Thank

the Lord that did not mean me, for I've only been down town once to-day. Hark! it is actually striking five o'clock, and I told ma I'd be back in half an hour. Well, we can walk as far as the next corner together, and then "good-by." That was a clever trick of mine not to let Jack come farther with me, for I want to go home by way of the hotel and see if I can catch a glimpse of that handsome drummer who went in there as I was going home to dinner. Our set of fellows are so ridiculously jealous of those travelling men, and never want the girls to make their acquaintance. Even the old ladies about town insinuate that the half of them are married men, and say we are very indiscreet to go with them. Well, married or single, he is mighty good-looking, and I shall venture to get a peep at him.

THE MORNING AFTER THE BALL.

I CAN'T see why you didn't keep my breakfast warm for me, ma. I do abominate cold coffee and stale toast, and it would have been very little trouble for you to have saved some for me. Here, Jim, get up and give me that rocking-chair,—I'm just tired to death. "If I want a warm breakfast, I ought to get up when the rest of the family do?" I guess if you had danced till three o'clock this morning you

wouldn't feel any more like getting up early than I did. I danced every set last night, and all the round dances in the bargain, and my feet are actually blistered; and now, when I want something respectable to eat, I can't have it. But just wait till I get a house of my own, and am my own mistress; I won't get up till noon, *you bet;* and if my head aches, or I'm tired to death, as I am now, I'll get some sympathy, instead of a scolding.

"You feel sorry for the fellow that gets me?" Humph! you're always saying that, ma, and I'd like to know why. I'm sure I'm as good-looking as other girls, and if pa wasn't so outrageously stingy, and would let me dress the way I want to, I wouldn't be afraid to bet I could get as rich a fellow as any of them. I want you to coax pa to get me a new check grenadine,—they're all the rage, and the new goods are perfectly divine this spring. It makes me fairly sick to hear him harping about retrenchment and hard times and all those awful things, and it seems to me he always chooses gloomy topics to converse about just when I need some new clothes. Oh! did I tell you I danced with Jack Hillyer seven times? He's perfectly splendid, ma; has the dearest little hands and feet, and is *such* a lovely dancer, and dresses so nice. Those Williams girls were awfully jealous because he was so devoted to me. I do wonder why they go out in society? It would bore me dreadfully to have to sit back and play wall-

flower, and be as prosy as they are; but then they affect to be so very particular and fastidious as to who they go with, but everybody knows it's "sour grapes" with them. I overheard them making fun of Jack Hillyer's "soap locks," as they called them, and one of them said she'd give a fellow the mitten who would part his hair in the middle. That shows how little taste they have. I think it gives a gentleman such a stylish look to wear his hair that way,—kind of poetical and Byronic, and all that, you know. But you couldn't expect those Williams girls to have any appreciation of what is nice; they don't care a fig who knows they scrub and wash dishes,—and oh! such spoggy red hands as they have sometimes. I declare, it would mortify me to death to have any of the fellows see my hands if they looked like theirs. Good heavens! Jim, you good-for-nothing boy, get off my foot; you tramped on my toe and nearly crushed it. You ought to know how my corns hurt after dancing all night! "I oughtn't to wear such tight shoes, and then I wouldn't have corns," did you say? Why, my shoes are not so very tight, ma; but you'd like to see me lumbering around in No. 8's, I suppose. Nonsense! I think I see myself wearing great loose, baggy shoes, like any country clodhopper; and you and pa might as well quit talking about it, for if there is anything I abominate more than another 'tis to see big feet.

"You think it is a painful sight to see a girl limp-

ing along and suffering untold tortures to gratify her vanity?" Pshaw! Of course it hurts like fury to have one's toes cramped up, but I'd rather suffer a little than have my feet spread all over creation, and know the gentlemen are making fun of them. Why, Fanny Hall *always* has to take off her shoes in church and rest her feet, or they would nearly kill her. She just leans her head over on the back of the seat in front of her and slips them off, and nobody knows but that she is praying, you know, and then at the last prayer she gets them on, and has them fastened before the rest get through; and so she's all hunki-dori, you see, and nobody is any the wiser. It's a mighty good plan, I think; but it wouldn't do for me, for I always get as red as a boiled lobster in the face when I stoop over.

I hope nobody will come this morning till I get myself dressed. This old wrapper is rather a contrast to my pink tarlatan that I wore last night, and I don't want any of the fellows to catch me with it on. Ma, I wish you'd put a fire in the parlor; I want to practise my music-lesson. "I ought to help you pare those apples?" Why, ma! I don't see how you can ask it, when you know how badly it stains one's hands. If I have to pitch in and pare apples and potatoes, and such things, my hands will look worse than any country-girl's,—all red and chapped,—and I'll have to grease them with glycerin, and wear gloves to bed every night for a month, to get them

to looking respectable. Besides, I'm too tired to help this morning; and if I go to that party to-night I shall have to save myself up, or I won't enjoy it at all. But, ma, I can't wear that pink tarlatan to many more parties. I shall have to get a white crape for an evening dress.

"Pa cannot afford it," did you say? Fiddlesticks! he'll have to afford it. If he ever expects me to get married, he ought to have sense enough to know that I must dress as well as other girls. "He's like you; he pities the man who takes me for a wife," does he? That is just like pa; he's such an old dunce, and goes around blowing about the laziness of the girls of the present generation, and the fellows will hear of it, and then farewell to my matrimonial chances. I'll be left an old maid on his hands, and he'll have to support me all the days of his life, and he'll have nobody to thank for it but himself, either.

Well, I believe while the parlor is warming, I'll go up-stairs and dress myself, so that I'll be presentable in case any one should call; and, besides, I remember I promised Nannie Day to go shopping with her, to select some worsted for her new sofa-pillow.

How miserably ma has ironed this white skirt of mine!—hardly a bit of starch in it, either. I think she might have taken a little more pains in ironing my clothes this week. I only had four skirts in the wash, and I don't believe she has done up one of them to suit me. Just to think of that malicious old

Mrs. Jones coming in here the other day, when ma was fluting a ruffle for me, and she said *her* girls wouldn't let their poor old mother stand over an ironing-board for a whole day ironing petticoats for them to draggle through the mud; and when ma told her it always made me sick to iron, she said she thought a girl who could stay up every night till one o'clock with beaux, or going to dances, had strength enough to iron her own clothes. She makes such ill-natured speeches, and is always setting up her girls as examples. If they want to stretch their hands all out of shape by ironing, they can do so; but I'd be a big goose to do it as long as any one will do it for me.

There's the door-bell! And that is Jack Brown's voice, inquiring for me. I expect he has called to take me out riding. I'll just run to the kitchen and tell ma if I'm not back by dinner-time to keep some warm for me.

"You thought I was too tired to move this morning?" Oh, ma, you are so queer; of course I was too tired to pare apples, but buggy-riding is an entirely different thing, you know.

AS A SINGER.

WHAT a horrid bore it is for a girl to have a father who wants to run the establishment all his own way! Now here's pa, without an ounce of sentiment or taste, pitching into me on all occasions because I won't rush to the piano and sing and play the very first time I am asked. Girls are not that green, I can tell him, and he can quote Mary Clark till doomsday, for all I care. He says she is the only sensible girl he knows; that when she is requested to play she don't begin to make excuses and apologies about a bad cold, or a lame wrist, or not being in practice, or the thousand other excuses that most young ladies have ready when everybody knows they are just dying to play, but she goes immediately to the piano and does the best she can. He don't know how much fun the other girls make of her, and I wouldn't be so anxious to show off my musical performances for all the world. But the reason all the old people lavish so much praise on her is because she plays "Fisher's Hornpipe," and all those awful old tunes that were played before Adam was born, that nobody thinks of learning nowadays. The other evening there were some friends at our house, and they

wanted some music, and pa asked me to open the piano and play for them. Of course I wasn't going to jump up on the very first invitation and make them think I was so eager, so I made some excuse, and they kept on urging, and I kept on refusing, although all the time I intended to play when they had coaxed long enough; but pa got terribly provoked, and let out on the silly practice, as he called it, of the girls of the present day having to be begged and coaxed every time they favor any one with a little music; that foolish parents spent hundreds of dollars on their daughters' musical education, and bought them expensive pianos, and in return for all this they were obliged to plead by the hour and literally to drag the girl to the instrument to get her to play the simplest tune; although, when there was no company present, and any work to be done, she could practise from morning till night, making the whole family crazy with her noise. I found he was going to talk all night, so I concluded to make the old gent "dry up" by playing a piece for them; so I began singing "*Ah che assorta*," when pa growled out, "Why on earth don't you sing something we can understand? None of these people understand Italian any more than you do yourself." *Then* he launched out on the habit of American people preferring everything foreign; they weren't satisfied with their own language, that they could pronounce, but must butcher foreign music, of which they know nothing; that

when a person asked a young lady to play or sing in this age of the world, instead of a tune one could follow and understand, she struck up on some roaring piece, that took in every key on the piano, and made you sorry you had asked her; or if it was a song you requested, she would roll her eyes towards the ceiling, and screech, "*Non fu sogno qui la voce*," or some other high-voiced thing in an unknown tongue. For my part, I always get so mad when pa gets on the subject of music, that I feel like singing the doxology and having him dismissed. Now, isn't he a bore of the first magnitude? He was reading the other day of twenty men in some town in Illinois, who had pledged themselves not to let their daughters study music until they could make good bread; and he thought it was the most sensible thing he had heard lately. Did you ever? The idea of those old plugs wanting to make kitchen drudges out of their own daughters, and denying them any accomplishments! When I told pa that, he said it depended mainly on what we considered accomplishments; that he and all sensible people, whose opinion was worth having, regarded a knowledge of household work a much greater accomplishment than banging the insides out of a piano, or having a smattering of two or three languages; and that the mothers of the present day were sadly delinquent in their duty to their daughters, in not fitting them for the prose as well as the poetry of life. Humph! if by prose he

means to stretch one's hands all out of shape baking bread and doing kitchen work, I believe I won't take any prose in mine.

PREPARING FOR A PARTY.

Now, ma, I want this affair to outshine the big party the Smiths gave two weeks ago. They feel so grand because they have a little more money than their neighbors; but I'm determined they shan't get ahead of me, so I don't want you to let pa's stingy, old-fashioned notions influence you, as he will try to have them do if he finds out how much it will cost; and I want to get all the invitations out before he sees the list of guests, or he'll want some of his low, commonplace friends invited, and I don't want anybody but the *bon-ton* here. You think we mustn't slight the Jacksons? Why, ma, how you talk! They live so horrid plain, in a little bit of a house, and none of my set associate with them; and then the Jackson girls dress so *awfully* dowdy. I heard one of them was going to learn the milliner business with Mrs. Trimmer; and of course they couldn't expect to come, poor things! They are good enough girls, I dare say; but then you know just how it is, ma, it wouldn't do to have them here. Then there are the

Blairs. I'll put down their names, of course, for they do give such elegant entertainments, and it is quite a feather in one's cap to be invited there. And the Morton girls—write their names, for they dress so handsomely and give such a brilliant appearance to a parlor. It won't do to leave out the Joneses, either, even if the girls are such dreadful mopes and never have a word to say, for old Jones is rich as Crœsus, and they're considered "O. K." in society, though people do make fun of the way the girls dress. Why, ma, don't you think, Betty Jones was at Smith's party with that very same old striped silk she has worn since the year one, trimmed in some cheap, old-fashioned lace, that looked as if Methusaleh, or his wife, had worn it before the flood; and every other girl there was out in a new tarlatan or party dress of some kind. I should think she would have felt so bored to be dressed so plainly; but la! she didn't seem to care a fig. Her father is rich, and she knows *that* will take her through. Put down Clara Black's name, too, for she sings and plays well, and music helps to fill up the time, and makes a party go off more lively. She's a dreadful homely creature, to be sure, but that will make the other girls appear to better advantage by the contrast; and then Clara is rather a pleasant girl,—never tries to monopolize the gentlemen, like some of the others do. That is such a detestable trait, I think. Molly White always does it; she's never happy unless she's jabbering to half a

dozen beaux. I'm sure I can't see why she should be so attractive. She don't dress well, and, dear knows! her father isn't rich. I confess it's a puzzle to me. It's her pretty face, I suppose; but everybody knows she paints and powders to distraction; that's the way she gets her nice complexion. Then there are the Hodges; what a nuisance to have to invite them! for the truth is I can't endure them. They are so horribly disagreeable, and lay such stress upon their intelligence. They regard all us girls as frivolous creatures; but one thing, our fellows never show them any attention in company. They would be perfect wall-flowers, if it were not for some prosy old professor or doctor of divinity, who converses with them just through pity. "It is because these foppish young fellows haven't brains enough to converse in anything but 'small talk' and nonsense," did you say? Why, ma, that isn't so, at all, for Tom Maguire is real smart, and can quote Byron by the page; and Ned Parks, and nearly all the other fellows, have been through college; so anybody might know they were well educated and could appreciate intellect, and all that sort of thing, you know. But I wouldn't invite the Hodges at all, if it wasn't that their cousin, young Curtis, is there; and they say he will get a big fortune when his uncle dies; so when that good luck happens, Curtis will be a decided "catch" for some girl who has been sharp enough to have had her "cap set" for him beforehand. Then, ma, put down Bob

Hathaway's name, too. I know he gets drunk occasionally; but he's of such a good family, and is such a splendid dancer when he's sober; and then he's engaged to Flora Nixon; she'd feel "put out" if he wasn't here. "Harry Stillman?" Oh! ma, what *can* you be thinking of? Why, he works in a machine-shop, and I went past there one day, and saw him dressed in a pair of the horridest blue overalls, and his face looked all dingy and grimy. It's such a pity that he chose such a low calling, instead of reading law or clerking in a store and trying to be "somebody." No, for mercy's sake, don't put his name on the list. I know it will provoke pa, but I couldn't possibly have him at my party without offending some who will be here. I s'pose you'll want me to have Aunt Jane and the girls, too? You do! I just thought you would want to stick them into society through me. There's no use in talking and saying that Aunt Jane is a worthy woman, and that if her husband hadn't taken pa in as an apprentice in the bakery, we wouldn't have had the comforts of a good home to-day, perhaps. This may be all very true; but you must reflect that times have changed, and they can't expect us to try and bolster all the "butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers" in the country into the first society on our ticket. And oh for Heaven's sake, ma, don't be always harping about pa's apprenticeship in a bake-shop, and his early poverty, and all that nonsense. It don't do any good,

and it's terribly mortifying to me. Why, what would Mrs. Banker Coles think, to hear you talk! Well, what if all the *élite* can trace their ancestry back to shoemakers and saddle-shops, and such places, as you say they can? It may all be; but they're not green enough to do it. But it seems to delight you and pa to bring up that odious topic as often as possible on purpose to mortify your children and make us laughing-stocks. And another thing I want done the evening of the party, is to have Ben and Fanny, and the rest of the children, kept out of the room, or they'll be telling something we don't want the whole world to know. Why, the other evening, when the minister and his wife and Mrs. Judge Smart were here to tea, I overheard one of the young ones telling them that pa said I was the worst-tempered girl in town. I was so mad I could have choked the little imp, and I know Mrs. Smart was trying to "pump" all she could out of the child, to go away and tell it again. But, then, that's the way with the world, I suppose, and we'll have to overlook Mrs. Smart's meanness and invite her, for she's a judge's wife, and dresses well, and gives tip-top parties. Of course it's a grand bore to have to invite so many people we don't like; but everybody does it, and we'll have to put up with it, for I want this party to be a success, you know.

ONE OF HER CONFIDANTES.

Oh, Susie! I have something to tell you; but you mustn't breathe it for the world. If you ever tell, I'll never forgive you. Well, I'm engaged,—Tom proposed last night, and I accepted. Just look at the ring he gave me! Isn't it the sweetest thing you ever saw? "Pure diamond?" Why, of course, you greeny; you don't suppose I'd have any other kind! I wouldn't marry a fellow who was too stingy to give me a handsome ring. That was the reason I broke my engagement with John Baily. He expected me to be put off with a plain gold one, worth about twelve or fifteen dollars; but I "couldn't see it," and so I let him go; I should have been *awfully* ashamed to have shown such a cheap thing as that to the other girls; but I shall enjoy displaying this one,—it will make them all so jealous.

I expect pa will "go for" me when he finds I'm engaged to Tom. He don't like him at all, and he told me the other day he wished I wouldn't have that scamp hanging round after me. The idea of calling Tom a scamp! Why, his father is the wealthiest man in town,—has oceans of money,—and Tom always dresses so nice, too, and is such a perfect gentleman.

And oh! he has the dearest little foot, and wears the loveliest neck-ties! I'm sorry he's so smooth-faced, for I always doted on big whiskers; but then a person can't expect to have everything in this world, you know, and of course he'll raise some as he gets older.

I overheard pa telling ma yesterday that he didn't see what possessed girls nowadays to prefer insignificant, perfumed dandies to honest, industrious young men, who were not ashamed to work; that all my beaux were lazy, good-for-nothing fellows, who loafed off their relations, and he hoped when I married I would take some worthy mechanic or farmer, —at least some one who had energy and business qualifications. Ugh! a greasy mechanic! the thought makes me shudder,—it almost makes my hair stand up straight, or it would if it wasn't frizzed.

Tom is one of the best hands at croquet I ever knew, and plays the guit—why! you have on your new hat, as true as I live! It's so becoming, and that shade of ribbon is so fashionable,—those faded tints are just lovely—well, as I was saying, he plays the guitar beautifully, and owns a perfect angel of a horse, and you know I can learn to drive. Won't it be splendid? I'm going to coax ma to commence buying my outfit right away, and I'll make pa "shell out" the "needful" tolerable lively, too, and then in case anything should occur to break off the engagement, why, I'll have the clothes anyway, you see.

I do wish I could manage to keep pa and ma out

of the parlor when I have company; they're always sure to use some ungrammatical or outlandish expression that mortifies me to death, and it's so *awfully* aggravating to have them in the room when Tom Maguire comes, for he's so fastidious and is so well connected, and his father is so rich, and all that, you know, and of course he notices it and makes fun of it to the other fellows.

You know yourself, Sue, it is enough to ruin the matrimonial prospects of any girl to have her parents expose their ignorance before a refined young man. I actually feel as if I should sink through the floor when ma says "hereditary." She'll call it "hairy-dittery" to the day of her death, I expect; but I might talk till doomsday and I couldn't make either of them understand that it is just killing to an educated person to hear people talk about "rheumatiz" and the "setting-room," and say "I wouldn't have went," and all those things; and it don't make any difference how much I scold ma about it in private, or tramp on her toes when there's company present, or frown at her, or wink, or do anything else to let her know she's making a blunder,—it don't do a bit of good,—it just goes in one ear and out of the other. When I undertake to lecture pa on *his* mistakes, though, he "gets on his ear" the first pop, and I can't "come it" over him so easily,—you know he's as obstinate as a mule! He says that Young America is progressing so rapidly, that in the course of a few years parents

will not dare open their mouths in their own houses without first asking permission of their children, and learning the correct phraseology; that bad grammar ranks as much of a crime against society as taking a man's life, in the estimation of addle-pated young ladies and gentlemen; and as for Tom Maguire being a competent critic simply because he was a graduate, that he was like a good many other simple people in this world who fancied that the ownership of a diploma was a substitute for brains and common sense. Did you ever? And then he went on to say that if the majority of older people were not quite so apt with their knowledge of grammar, at least they were not guilty of the odious practice of using slang, as nine-tenths of the young folks were; that he presumed that I thought "particular fits," and "can't see it," and "hunki-dori," and such expressions, were very elegant and lady-like, but refined and really fastidious people always frowned them down. Of course I was as mad as a hornet,—who wouldn't be? But I let the old gentleman "pitch in" for a while, and then, when I got tired of his "rat-killing," I "lit out." You bet I wasn't going to stay there till doomsday, listening to his prosy old confab, so I rigged up in my best "bib and tucker" and called for Nellie Smith to go and take a walk. Oh! isn't she a jealous thing? It always bores her so for me to get anything new, and that day I had on those bracelets I bought ma for a Christmas present,—you remember that pair at

Dean's, that were set with garnets, that I had charged to pa, and he got so plaguey "huffy" about? Well, I put them on, and don't you think Nell never pretended to notice them, although I unfastened one of them and refastened it, just to attract her attention; but anybody with half an eye could see she was just dying with jealousy!

Ma said maybe Nell was just paying me back for the way I acted about her new brown silk. You see, she wore it to our house, calling, when she first got it, and I was just *too* provoked when I saw her sailing around with it on, for I'd been coaxing pa for that very piece of goods for a month past; but of course he refused, and so when she came splurging over to our house with it on, I was determined she shouldn't get a word out of me in praise of it. So, when she found I wasn't going to notice it in any way, she was green enough to say, "How do you like my dress?" I looked as innocent as possible, and said, "Why, is it new? I thought it was your old light silk colored over!" I tell you, she was awfully bored to think I wouldn't go into conniptions over it, and she made herself pretty tolerable scarce for a while after that; but I was bound she should not crow over me.

Well, I must go. Remember, don't tell a living soul about my engagement. You are the only person I've confided it to, except Kate Miller and Fanny Brown, and they've promised solemnly not to tell.

MEETS HER MOST INTIMATE FRIEND.

OH! you darling thing! I've actually been dying to see you, to ask you how to "do" my curls over. One of them narrowly escaped being burnt up the other day; you see, I first brushed the curl around a stick, then I took the yolk of an egg and glued it all over, to make it stick together, and put it in the oven to dry; but I forgot to tell ma it was in there, and she made up a big fire to bake her bread, and my poor curl was almost cooked. You bet I was mad.

What a sweet dress you have on!—one of the new style checks, isn't it? I think those broken plaids are just divine; but ma don't want me to get one, because, she says, I am too short to wear anything but stripes or plain goods, and that I ought to consult taste rather than fashion; but la! I don't care for that, you know,—whatever is fashionable is always in taste after you get used to it, and then, besides, how horrid it would be to see every other girl with one, and have to do without myself!

What do you think? Pa wants me to quit going with Dick Scott, just because he gets drunk occasionally! Did you ever? I told pa very plainly it

was a very mean thing to denounce a young fellow just for getting on a bender once in a while; besides, you know, it is an advantage to some fellows to get a little too much,—it makes them generous. Now, there was Jim Hall, you remember? When he was sober he was as stingy as the Old Nick, but when he got about half tight he'd spend his last cent on the girls. Isn't that Mary Clark on the other side of the street? I declare, she's had the impudence to get a hat exactly like mine. If there's a thing I despise, it's to have forty thousand people patterning after my clothes.

Oh! there's a woman with long back curls! Don't she look too funny! Poor creature! I don't suppose she knows the fashion has changed; some woman from the country, I expect; and yet she looks quite respectable otherwise. Pa says I look perfectly ridiculous with my hair "banged," and he don't see what has got into the women to cut their front hair off and comb it down in a fringe nearly to their eyebrows, or crinkle up a little bunch over their foreheads, like an African's wool,—that the men think it makes a girl look idiotic instead of pretty; but he supposes if it were fashionable for women to have their two front teeth knocked out, I would pronounce the style "lovely." He says you wouldn't catch Kate Clark making such a fright of herself by following every caprice of style; but *she's* a paragon in his eyes, you know. He says she has more sense than any other

girl in town, and that she will marry better and be a happier woman, because she is so practical and won't sacrifice her health and comfort to fashion. Here's the post-office: look in and see if any of the fellows are in there.

Can't you make an errand into Perkins's store? We don't want to go home so early, so let's go in there and have a chat with the clerks. One of them is *so* pretty, and wears the loveliest Ulster! Those Ulsters are so stylish, you know. There! look at this fellow coming towards us. Hasn't he the *killing-est* moustache? But come on; here we are at Perkins's! We can ask for some article we know they haven't got, or buy a spool of thread or something.

HER VIEWS OF FLIRTING.

It's ridiculous for pa to make such a fuss over a little flirtation! If Joe Harris wants to fall in love with me, that's his lookout, not mine; I'm sure I didn't tell him to; although pa contends that it is evident I drew him on, and that if I had been so inclined I could easily have discouraged his advances in the beginning, or, better still, if I had been prudent there need never have been a beginning. Pooh! give up wearing coquettish little frizzes and 'cute lace fixings, and lockets around my neck, and black velvet

bows on my hair, and everything that makes a girl look pretty, just for the sake of scaring the fellows away! Not much, I thank you!

He needn't think he can frighten me, either, by saying that a girl who is forward and always endeavoring to attract the attention of every young man, is always disliked by her female acquaintances, and that I ought to reflect that such conduct will be sure to draw on me the jealousy and ill will of my girl friends. I don't scare worth a cent! In fact, that's the part I like best, for I think it's splendid fun to have a lot of girls looking as black as thunder-clouds at you because you got their beaux away from them. There's Jenny Foster; I know she was mad enough to throttle me last evening when Dick Scott left her and devoted himself to me the rest of the time. They say she's dead in love with him; but I wouldn't show it that plain if I were ever so jealous.

Pa might as well ask me to give up society altogether as to give up the fellows; for my part, I think it would be horribly dull without them, and I do hope to goodness that Congress won't go to raising a rumpus with Russia or Turkey, so they'll have to go to war, and all be killed off, and nobody be left to dance with or take us to picnics, or skating, or anything. And that reminds me I must sew a new rubber on my skating-cap before I wear it to the rink again. It is such a jaunty little thing, and Dick Scott says I look mighty pretty in it. What a flat-

terer he is! How I did have to laugh the other day when he was buckling Mary Foster's skates for her! Her feet look like regular mud-hooks in those big leather shoes she wears; but she says you don't catch her limping and hobbling around like a deformed person for the sake of having a little foot. Pshaw! I detest to see a girl trying to show off and be strong-minded! I'd strap on my own skates, if it nearly killed me, before I'd let a fellow see I had such a big foot as she has. She's a splendid skater, though, which ma declares is owing to not having her feet cramped up in narrow shoes, that prevent her from exercising the muscles. But that's just one of ma's notions. How should *she* know anything about it, when she never had on a pair of skates in her life, and couldn't be hired to slide across a frozen mud-puddle?

TO ONE OF HER DEAR FIVE HUNDRED FRIENDS.

You saw me at church last Sunday, did you? Yes, I went because pa insisted so much. He said the other night that the Young Men's Christian Association had requested special prayers to be offered in all the churches last Sunday for the benefit of young men, and that I'd got to go. Of course I didn't want to go to such a dry affair, and so I told him I

hadn't anything to wear; but he said that when I wanted to go to a party or a concert I could generally find something to appear in, and that I needn't make any such excuses to him. So, when I reflected that all the fellows would be there, and that I hadn't worn my new dolman to church yet, nor my bran splinter new hat, I finally agreed to go. Some of the remarks were so odd; and, don't you think, one preacher said that "caste" and distinction in society were among the main causes of the irreligion of the young men of the present day; that young men who worked at trades for a living—mechanics and those fellows, you know—were not received into what is termed "first society;" it was he who dressed well and lounged on the street-corners, with nothing to do, who was shown attentions and regarded as an equal; and that these social distinctions led young men to form habits of idleness, and idleness led to crime. Here pa groaned out amen! by way of endorsement to the preacher, and that set me to giggling, and I knew I'd get "particular fits" for it on the way home; but I couldn't possibly help it. Then another preacher made some remarks, in which he said that the girls ought to invite young men to accompany them to church. I told pa on the way home that it would look decidedly "fresh" in a girl to be coaxing a fellow to take her to church; but he said that young ladies were not so fastidious as to whether people called them "fresh" when they vis-

ited stores and groceries on purpose to talk to the clerks, and walked the streets with the avowed purpose of getting to see the fellows; and should they be so fastidious about doing good? The idea of one of the girls in "our set" being "spooney" on a working-fellow, and inviting him to promenade to church with her! Wouldn't it be rich? You know their hands always are so rough and nutmeg grater-y.

If that's the game they want to play on us girls, they'll find they "can't come it." I, for one, will show 'em I won't "take any Young Men's Christian Association in mine." No, sir; not "if the court knows herself, and she thinks she do."

AS A COOK.

Good heavens! Here is a letter from ma, saying she won't be back for a week; but I shan't submit to that; so I'll go to the telegraph office right now and dispatch for her to come home immediately, if she don't want to see us all starved to death, and pa going crazy. You see, Sue, yesterday, while I was visiting in the country, ma received a telegram to start as soon as possible to see her sick sister, and don't you think, when I got home in the evening, here was supper to get, and pa actually expected me

to do the work till ma's return! I told him I didn't know any more about cooking than a child two years old; but he only laughed, and said then this was a good time to learn. I was so provoked that I just took a good cry; but there happened to be enough left from dinner to put on the table for supper, and the next morning I took good care to have a bad headache; so I didn't have to get up for breakfast; and when I went down-stairs, I found pa had made himself a cup of coffee and gone to the office. But there was dinner to get, and the young ones all yelling around for something to eat, and I didn't know what in the world to do. But I got a mackerel and put it on to fry, and thought I'd stew some dried apples; and I never saw such mean things to cook. Why, I only put on about a bucketful; and don't you think they swelled and swelled, and kept on swelling up so, that at last I had every dish in the house full, besides some in crocks and jars! And then, after all my pains, pa said he couldn't eat such trash. He took a mouthful of fish, and made the most awful face, as if he was poisoned, and asked me why on earth I hadn't soaked out the salt before I cooked it: —just as if I knew it had any salt in it. Then he stormed at a huge rate, saying that ma deserved to be severely censured for raising a daughter in such idleness and ignorance; that it was a discredit to any woman not to know how to cook. He considered bread-baking more of an accomplishment than strum-

ming on the piano, or making fancy jimcracks out of red worsted on Java canvas, or fooling away time playing croquet. But there were so many dunces in the world who thought work a disgrace, that plenty of poor, shallow, silly girls, who did know how to cook and iron and bake, were ashamed of it, and thought it nice to pretend ignorance; and that a young lady who knew how to get up a well-cooked dinner ought to be proud rather than mortified; and that if women would raise their daughters to know something of the practicalities of life, there would be fewer unhappy marriages. Fiddlesticks! If he had to be stuck in a hot kitchen, over a hot stove, with the smell of victuals cooking always under his nose, and put in his spare time scrubbing floors, scouring tinware, and peeling potatoes, he wouldn't have so much time to be speculating on divorces and unhappy marriages! And then he went on to say how he pitied Tom Maguire from the bottom of his heart if he married me—I'd make a fine helpmeet, wouldn't I? But he supposed that I thought we could live on love; but I'd find out differently. Love was a very nice thing, but it wouldn't fill a man's stomach when he was hungry; and I ought to take warning in time, and prepare myself by a thorough course of cooking and housework generally. I told him he needn't trouble himself so much about my ignorance, because Tom and I didn't expect to keep house—we intended to board; and even if we ever should go to

housekeeping, of course we'd always keep servants to do the work. Yes, he said, but I might accidentally be without a servant some time, and then I would be thankful for my knowledge of cooking; besides, how could I direct my servants unless I knew how to work myself? But it would take money to carry out either of my plans, and he thought a young couple just beginning in the world would command more respect from sensible people to live on a moderate scale until they could better afford luxuries; but that was the way with young persons in this age—they wanted to begin life in better style than their fathers left off; that it was better to begin at the foot of the ladder and work up. Why, he began life with only sixty cents in the world. Well! do you know, when pa commences harping on the way he began life, it always makes me rantankerously mad. I've heard that sixty-cent story ever since I was old enough to crawl, and when he tunes up on it I always go to the piano and play as loud as I can, to drown the sound, and then when he finds out I'm not listening to him, he "dries up." He's so fond of telling strangers and everybody how poor he was, and how he had to struggle to get to his present position, just as if he was proud of it! And he don't reflect how it sounds to genteel people to be bragging about his honest old father, who was a saddler, or a bricklayer, or something low like that. Isn't it humiliating?

HER VIEWS ON EDUCATION.

How absurd in pa to want me to review my studies! I told him it would look ridiculous for me to commence studying again, after I had once graduated. I'm sure I know as much as other girls, and that is all that is necessary. If, as he says, "a little learning is a dangerous thing," I don't understand why a good deal isn't still more dangerous, and I shan't waste my time poring over school-books. However, if a girl is at all 'cute she can take all the studies in the course, and get her diploma without bothering her head much with study. Between looking in her book on the sly, and getting the other girls to tell her the rest, she can pass through the recitations readily enough, and come out with as much credit as those girls who spend all their time nosing over their books. Of course it's all well enough for ugly girls to study and acquire an education, for they must have something to recommend them, and if they never get a husband, they can teach school or something, poor things; but when a girl has beauty or a rich father, she is all "hunki-dori" without so much knowledge. Ma always said my handsome eyes would carry me through this world, and so I've never bothered my-

self much about books. For a girl who expects to go much into society, about all that is needed is to take up a few of the higher branches, just to be able to say she has studied them. It sounds kind of nice, I think, to mention that one has finished geometry, trigonometry, and all the other ometries,—it makes one appear educated, whether she is or not; and as for a graduating essay, some girls make such a bugaboo of it, and write and rewrite for weeks beforehand to prepare something fine, thinking, in their simplicity, that a good composition will make up for plainness in dress. But talent unadorned is about "played out," I can tell them! The prettiest and the best-dressed girl on the stage will attract the attention and get all the compliments and bouquets. The young fellows go in for style and beauty, and don't care a fig for the essay part, while the women in the audience are looking to see how your sash is looped and the way your hair is puffed, and comparing your dress with those of the other girls; consequently, they won't criticise the essay very closely, and no one who has half sense will devote days in writing an article that will be listened to by only a few old gray-headed married men.

GOES TO A PICNIC.

OH! Sue, where *have* you been for so long? It seems like an age since I saw you. It's nearly two whole days, isn't it? I was down town this morning, and, as I didn't see anything of you on the street, I was afraid you were sick or something; but I hadn't time to go round to your house to see you, for I had just got an invitation to go to the picnic, and I had to hurry home and tell ma, so that she could iron my white lawn dress for me to wear. And don't you think, she tried to persuade me to wear my old brown linen suit,—you know I've had it for six months or more, and the overskirt is all out of style; she said it was the very thing to wear to a picnic, and that my white tucked and ruffled Victoria lawn would look altogether out of place, and I'd be sure to come home with it torn and ruined. And oh! what a sermon she did preach on appropriate dressing,—said that the prettiest dress was always the one that was the most suitable to the occasion, and girls in going to picnics and country excursions would show their good sense if they would wear calico dresses, broad-rimmed hats, and Lisle-thread gloves, and that Swiss muslins and kid gloves were as much out of place

there as a party toilet at a funeral; that things had come to such a pass now that every time a girl went on the street she must rig herself in her very best, and primp and fix for an hour before she could start; but one consolation was that sensible people always set down such girls as having more clothes than brains.

Well, I can't say I have any objection to wearing a calico dress occasionally, if it's made fashionably; but Lisle-thread gloves are too awfully dowdy; they make a woman look like a perfect country hawbuck; though ma says she'd rather wear them than to wear dirty, light kid ones, as so many do.

After ma got through, I told her that calico dresses and cotton gloves were doubtless very elegant when she was a girl and wore skoot bonnets and made her dress skirts with two widths in them, but I didn't propose to go to that picnic looking like a backwoods hoosier, and if I couldn't go dressed decently I'd stay at home; and I'd quit going out in society if I couldn't buy things like other girls, and I'd break off my engagement with Tom, too, so I would. That brought her to terms right away,—it always does,—for she can't bear to have me moping at home when every other girl in town is having a good time; besides, she has such a horror of having me an old maid. So I won the day, and I spruced up and went to the store and bought myself the loveliest pair of blue kids to match my sash and hair ribbon. Just as I was starting, ma called after me, and said she hoped

I'd get them big enough for my whole hand to go in, —that I generally bought such small ones that I always had to leave my thumb sticking out. Wasn't it malicious in ma to say that?

On my way home I went around to Jones's to show the girls my purchase, for it always bores them so for me to get anything new; besides, I wanted to find out what they were going to wear; and, don't you suppose, those two girls were canning fruit this awful hot day, and their faces were redder than pickled beets! Won't they be sweet-looking things to go to a picnic this afternoon? And there was their mother lying in the sitting-room on the sofa, reading, as cool and comfortable as you please! Don't she treat them mean? They never offered to show me their dresses, after all my trouble in going so far out of my way to let them see my gloves; but I asked what they were going to wear. And what do you think it is? Why, those old Chambray ginghams that they wore all last summer,—the overskirts not looped fashionably or anything. Wouldn't you be ashamed to go looking so antiquated?

HER VIEWS OF KISSING.

HERE come those odious Smith girls. They're out making calls, I suppose, as I see they have on their new silks. I wish we were on the opposite side of the street, ma, so we wouldn't have to meet them. Their breath always smells so horrid, as if they had been eating onions, and it fairly makes me sick when I have to kiss them. I'm not obliged to kiss them, did you say, ma? I'd like to know how I can get out of it. It's customary for girls to kiss each other whenever they meet, and I always have done it, and if I didn't kiss them now, they'd think I was offended about something; besides, it's a cheap way of making people believe you like them, you know, and it looks cordial and friendly, and all that sort of thing, even if it doesn't mean anything. You've got some of pa's old-maidish notions, I find. Well, I confess, although I was awful mad at him the other day, I couldn't keep from laughing when he described what he termed the silly way that women rushed at each other and kissed on the street, and so much chattering of "Oh! I'm so glad to see you!" and "Where have you kept yourself for so long?" with as many demonstrations of joy as if it had been years since

they had met, instead of perhaps only twenty-four hours. He said such practices were disgusting to men of good sound sense. Perhaps a few callow youths might pronounce this custom charming,—young men who parted their hair in the middle, and plastered it fast to their foreheads till it nearly touched their eyebrows,—green, overgrown boys, who had hardly enough brains to balance their very shiny plug hats, whose loftiest ambition was to excel in dancing, and sport a big ring with a big set, and a heavy oreide chain; and further, these very fellows, to whom girls were so lavish with their smiles, were the very ones who made it a business to stand on the street-corners on windy days and make comments on the ladies' ankles. Of course I didn't believe such stuff about any one of our set of boys, and I told pa his imagination was very lively; but he said if young ladies only knew how many indelicate remarks their silly actions called forth from these young snobs, they would be more circumspect in their deportment. I don't believe a single word of it, though, for pa invariably makes it a point to be prejudiced against everything that wasn't customary and fashionable in the days that Noah was in the ark.

HER CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

I DECLARE, I'll never make pa another Christmas present as long as I live. He's too ungrateful and stingy to enjoy good health. Instead of being pleased with the card-receiver I gave him, he just "went for" me because I had it charged to him; said that was a pretty way of making presents and appearing liberal, and letting him foot the bill; and I knew very well ma would never wear the bracelets I gave her and let him pay for; that all I wanted was to get her something that I could wear myself; and he supposed that velvet smoking-cap, all braided over with gilt gimcracks, that he had seen me working at for the last three weeks for Tom Maguire, would have to be paid for out of his pocket, too.

There's no use in his being so horrid stingy and "small" over a few dollars' worth of Christmas gifts. It would look pretty, wouldn't it, not to give Tom Maguire something, when he gave me such a nice pair of skates last year! and the smoking-cap won't cost over five dollars, and that isn't going to "bust" pa, I guess. But won't the old gentleman stand on his ear when he has to "fork over" the money for that cigar-case I gave Ben Brown, and when old

Smith duns him for the pay for those sleeve-buttons I bought for Ned Parks? then, oh! won't I catch "Hail Columby"?

The Bible says that it is better to give than to receive, and, as pa's so poky religious, I thought it would just suit him to quote Scripture to him; but he scowled, and said it didn't mean it was blessed to give presents and pay for them out of other people's pockets.

But that is the way everybody does; every woman, I mean. They have to do it. I'd like to know how they'd ever get presents for their husbands and beaux if they didn't let the men pay for them?

I wish I had that scarf back again that I knit for Bob Galt last winter. To think how much pains I took with it, and I can't begin to remember how many dollars' worth of zephyr I used; and then the stingy creature only gave me a little twopenny book in return! I wouldn't be *that* mean, if I was a fellow!

I'm mighty glad pa hasn't found out about that foot-rest I'm making for Joe Adams. He'd think it was the height of nonsense to spend money on such a thing. It does seem a pity to use such a pretty ornament for a great overgrown lubberly man to put his feet on, and of course that's just what he'll do. Men have so little judgment in such things—just as soon pounce down with their whole weight on your nicest chair as not. There's pa, for example—he invariably lays his head on my embroidered sofa-pillow

when he takes his Sunday-afternoon nap, no matter how many times I tell him about it. He always says he don't see any sense in putting a cushion on the lounge if it isn't to be used.

HAS THE NEURALGIA.

DON'T I look as yellow as a ghost to-day, Sue? That last box of lily-white is so abominably scratchy that I don't like to put it on my face. Ma wants me to quit using powder altogether, for she says it's ruining my complexion; but la! I never used half as much as some girls. There's Matty Boyd; they say she puts it on just thick when she first gets up in the morning, and her face has got to be as rough as if she'd had the smallpox, and that's the reason she always wears that dotted lace veil. I think those veils are a blessed invention,—they hide so many defects.

There! who was that passed the window just now? Jennie Grey, as true as I live. I hardly know her any more, she's getting so big and fat. I wonder why on earth she don't drink vinegar or do something to reduce her flesh! I wouldn't be as enormous as she is for all the world; why, her waist is nearly as big around as pa's. I don't believe she wears a corset, or, if she does, she's too pious to lace

it tight enough to make her a pretty shape; and you *never* saw such ankles,—almost as thick as mill-posts. She's a horrid-looking creature, in my opinion; and yet there are some people who profess to admire her. Here's ma, now, she thinks Jennie Grey the finest-looking girl in town, and is always harping about her clear, rosy complexion and fine physique. Health is ma's criterion of beauty, and slim waists and pasty complexions, as she calls them, are her aversion. Just so a girl doesn't use powder nor paint her cheeks, and looks like a newly-arrived Dutch emigrant, with big, broad shoulders and substantial limbs, ma sets her down for a seraph right off.

"You say that no wasp-waisted, sallow-faced girl, who wears a pound or two of false hair, and is always suffering from headache, can ever be as handsome, in your estimation, as a girl who is not ashamed to be the shape that nature formed her, and who rejects all styles of dress that interfere with her comfort."

Oh! pshaw! of course, ma, we know that anybody would rather feel well all the time than to be half dead with neuralgia and pain in one's side; but, dear me! I don't see how we are going to help it, unless the fashion-books start some new styles. I'm sure, if anybody knows what it is to suffer from wearing so much hair, I'm that person, for I've always worn two switches; besides, when coronet braids were fashionable, I wore a great heavy one across the top of my head. That is the only thing I envy Jennie Grey

for; she has such a splendid suit of hair,—every bit her own,—and she's the only girl in town who can boast of not wearing at least one switch. They are not wearing quite so much hair now, and I'm *so* thankful, for I've hardly got enough left to stick a hair-pin in; for nobody can keep such a load on their heads unless they use a whole box of hair-pins at a time. I know something about the tortures a girl suffers when she has about forty sharp-pointed ones digging into her scalp; frizzing the hair spoils it so, too,—mine is all broken off in front. Pa says if the rage for crimping the hair, and wearing so much of it, should continue two years longer, every woman in the country will be bald-headed; and I shouldn't wonder much! Aunt Lucy thinks the present styles of hats and bonnets are as bad as the false hair, and claims they have done more towards destroying the health of American women than any mode of dress that ever was fashionable, because they are so small and leave all the back part of the head and neck so exposed; and she affirms that neuralgia and catarrh are alarmingly on the increase since this style came in vogue, and that if people would dress sensibly, with some regard to comfort as well as beauty, they needn't suffer half the aches and pains they do; but, she says, every woman is so anxious to be dressed in the tip of the fashion, that she is willing to run the risk of being made an invalid for life; and that girls are such fools that, for the sake of looking pretty

for just one evening, they don't mind going around sniffling all the next day with a cold in the head and a sore throat; and then, by night-time, they're ready for another party!

ON THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

I WONDER who'll speak at the Murphy meeting to-night? If it's any of our home fellows, I believe I won't go. Somehow, the meetings always seem so flat and prosy unless there is some one from abroad to draw a crowd. Ma says that's the only objectionable feature in it,—that people will run after these strangers, who confess to having been the veriest scum of the gutter, and make heroes of them on the spot, toady them and feast them, when they wouldn't take by the hand a poor fellow of their own town whose record has not been half so villanous, and invite *him* to their houses and make an equal of him! She says, too, it has created a feeling of pride in a man for his past dirty exploits; that he becomes consequential in proportion to the depth of meanness he had sunk to that he brags about to his admiring audience.

As to that, I don't pretend to know, of course; for on that part of the subject I'm just as I was when

Uncle Fred used to talk of the injurious influences the crusade would have on society by giving women a thirst for public life and an anxiety to dabble in politics, and the moral bearing of the affair, etc., etc. I don't claim to know or understand anything about that side of the question, for I think such things ought to be turned over to the theologians and preachers, and such folks, who are paid for studying up such dry, poky stuff. But I like the Murphy movement a great deal better than I did the women's crusade. You can dress to go to these meetings with some degree of satisfaction, and not feel as if your best clothes would be ruined by tramping around in all sorts of weather to visit the saloons. My gray poplin was completely spoiled the rainy day that I went with the ladies when they besieged old Robinson's doggery. Of course I only went for the fun of it, to see how those whisky-sellers would act; but if I had known my dress would have been spoiled, you may bet I'd have stayed at home. "It served me right, if I only went through curiosity?" Oh! plague on it, ma, you always want me to be stuck in the house forever and never see what is going on. I always did like anything sensational, you know.

"I ought to be ashamed to talk so flippantly of so good an object!" Well, I wouldn't, only it always sets me on my "ear" to think of the way they toted that old daddy Van Pelt around over the country, as if he were some distinguished person, and the papers

all puffing him up to the seventh heaven, and hardly a word of recognition or praise for us girls who went plodding about with the old ladies, looking like drowned rats, with the frizz all out of our hair with the rain, and our skirts hanging tight around our feet! I declare, my ankles were wet all day long, and I had the sore throat for a month after.

It don't pay to put up with all such horrid things and then never even have your name printed. Oh! but didn't pa talk to me like a "Dutch uncle," at first, for going to the saloons; but then he didn't believe in it when it first started; but you changed his tune, didn't you, ma? I just have to giggle when I think of the way he came around. He said the prayers were to God, and not to the whisky-sellers, and the prayers would be answered as rapidly if the women were to make them in church or in their own homes; that it wasn't prayer that would bring those fellows to terms; they would give in only because they couldn't stand it to be worried every day with the ladies; and he predicted that it couldn't last, because these women couldn't keep up the thing forever, for they had homes and families that needed their attention, and when the visits stopped, the liquor business would begin again. Still, although he professed to see differently afterwards, and acted very zealously in the cause, between you and me and the door-post, ma, I believe he got awful tired of eating scraps and cold dinners, he! he! he!

And then the papers were so filled with the women's raids that it got to be a grand bore. They crowded out all the love-stories and fashion items, and everything else that was interesting, and dished up grog-shops, and psalm-singing, and long-winded speeches from long-winded preachers, by the column. That's the way these editors always overdo the thing.

ON THE CLERICAL FRATERNITY.

HAVE you met the new preacher, Sue? Hasn't he the most angelic eyes you ever saw? If he was anything in the world but a minister, I believe I'd set my cap for him; but I wouldn't marry a preacher, if he was the last man on earth and I loved him to distraction. Not that I have anything against them particularly, but you know they are generally such a poor, half-starved set, and have to put up with just whatever people choose to give them; and their wives nearly always have such a forlorn look, as though they weren't sure whether their souls belonged to themselves or the pewholders; and then everybody who pays three cents towards the salary thinks he has a right to pick at and criticise them. Of course it's impossible for them to please every

one, no matter how good and pious they may try to be; because, while one half of the congregation are blaming them for being extravagant, if they get new clothes occasionally and aim to look like other people, the other half are saying the minister's wife ought to be ashamed of herself to wear such cheap, dowdy things as she does.

If their salary was ever half paid up, they might afford to be a little more independent, and do as they pleased; but there are always people in every church who subscribe more than they are willing to give when pay-time comes, and they get mad if they are dunned for it; and, besides, how would it look for a preacher to be forever dogging up his church trustees, or whoever it is that attends to such matters, or rather, more frequently, that does *not* attend to such matters?

There's one thing, though, that I'd set my foot down on, you bet. If they wouldn't pay what they owed me, I wouldn't let 'em pretend to make up the deficiency and ease their consciences by a donation party and have it stuck in the newspapers how generous they were to their "beloved pastor" and his family. You know that donation party the ladies got up for old pappy Meekman last spring? Ma was on the committee to receive the presents, and you'd have died laughing to hear her tell about the tucked and embroidered night-caps that came pouring in, enough to last Mrs. Meekman till the next Centennial

at least (you know it don't take much stuff to make them, and that's why everybody sent one, I suppose); and she said she believed every girl in the congregation who was old enough to hold a needle had worked the parson a bead watch-pocket; and I don't think the poor old soul ever owned a watch. That was about all he got, except a cheap chromo or two. Yes, and somebody passed around the hat and took up a collection to get him a new overcoat, and perhaps some liberal-minded deacon added a few pounds of bacon or a sack of flour.

How the preacher's wife can get herself into a suitable frame of mind to attend the Dorcas Sewing Society, and lead the female prayer-meeting for a month, after such a humiliation as a one-horse donation party, is ahead of me; for those little jobs are expected of her just as much as a sermon is expected of her husband. Of course all ministers don't have such hard times, nor have the lines fall to them in such unpleasant places, for some of them are lucky enough to get the titles of D.D., and LL.D., and C. O. D., and all those letters, hitched to their names, and it is to be hoped with that amount of ballast they fare better. But it never would be my luck to get a bishop or anything like that; and, anyway, I don't believe I'd like it.

I tell you, a preacher has a hard life of it. But he isn't half as much to be pitied as his wife is, for he often goes away to attend church conventions,

and synods, and conferences; and then he's right in clover, for he knows everybody tries at such times to see who can entertain the ministers best by feasting them on turkey and chicken-salad and all kinds of goodies; and while he's stuffing himself on the fat of the land, and having a jolly good time, she and the children are getting along as best they can at home, munching the deacon's bacon. I wouldn't put up with such treatment from the best man that ever lived!

ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION.

PLAGUE on the hard times! I wish Jay Cooke, and the Credit Mobilier, and the Greenback men, and all those fellows, had been at the bottom of the Red Sea before they got a chance to make money so scarce. How I wish women could vote! I bet we wouldn't send such creatures to Congress. And now, because they've acted so, I've got to do without that lovely camel's-hair polonaise that I'd set my heart on, and they're *so* fashionable! I suppose I'll just have to stick in the house forever, because I won't have anything decent to wear, and there is no use in trying to coax pa into anything. He goes moping about with a face as long as the moral law, and talks of nothing but "watered stocks, and inflation, and

shrinkage of values," which I can comprehend about as well as so much Greek; the only "watered" stuff that interests me is some watered damassé dress goods I saw the other day,—perfectly angelic, and, oh! I do want some of it so badly. I really don't see how I am going to get along without a suit of it.

I heard pa say he advocated a return to specie payment; and so do I, if it means gold, because gilt buttons are worn so much now, and I'd worry him into getting me some if specie was plenty. But as to a substitute for the polonaise, I'll get on the good side of ma and persuade her to let me cut up her Cashmere shawl to make me a dolman. It will make a pretty wrap, and will do me more good than if she kept it for a shawl; besides, it will be better for her to stay at home in the winter time, for fear of getting the rheumatism or chills or something. I'll manage the shawl somehow; but, even if I do, it won't look as stylish as a new one, and I think it's too abominably mean to go and get up a money pressure when the new styles are so sweet! I wouldn't care half so much if the new goods were ugly and dowdy; but just when long buttoned gloves and camel's-hair cloaks are all the rage, it's too bad. Oh, dear!

LEANING OVER THE GATE.

I CAN'T help you with the work this morning, ma; I've taken such a dreadful cold, and am as hoarse as a frog. "It's because I stood leaning over the gate for two hours last night, talking to Tom Maguire," did you say? Why, ma, I'm sure it wasn't so long as that; and, besides, I had my scarf tied over my ears, and I didn't feel the least bit cold; so I'm sure it wasn't that.

"You don't approve of girls standing in the night air to talk to their beaux, at hours when sensible people are in bed?" I suppose, then, ma, I'll have to thank you for the horrid way pa acted last night; why, I was actually mortified to death to hear him come prowling to the front door and calling to me that it was *bed-time.* Why can't he say "retire," if he must talk about such things? Pa is so awful coarse in his expressions; and to think, after I had told him half a dozen times that I'd be in in a minute, of his coming to the window and bawling out, "Come in, and let that young man go home,—'tis time to go to bed." I know Tom thought pa had lots of "cheek," to talk that way to my visitors, and I was so bored that I thought I'd sink through the earth. Well,

that was the greatest trick pa was ever guilty of, for I expect he's offended Tom forever, and he's considered such a "catch;" his father is as rich as a Jew, and there isn't a girl in town but would snap at the chance of getting him; but "my cake is all dough" now. Pa's "put his foot in it" this time, sure enough, for Tom is such a high-spirited fellow he'll hardly come here again, after being insulted that way, and I'll be an old maid as sure as shooting, and all owing to pa's fastidious notions. I'll bet pa used to hang over the gate-posts and talk to the girls when he was a young man; but that's the way with these old sardines,—they forget that they were ever young, and they want girls to be muffled up in flannel and sit by the fire and piece bed-quilts, as they used to do two or three thousand years ago; but I "can't see it" in that light.

"Pa would rather I wouldn't receive Tom Maguire's attentions, because he gets drunk?" Why, ma, you talk as if he was a regular drunkard; and he only gets on little sprees occasionally, and the fellows all do that, you know, and he's no worse than the rest; and if we girls were to refuse attentions to gentlemen on that score, I'm thinking we'd have a dull time sticking at home, with nobody to take us to picnics or concerts or anything; so, you see, we just have to put up with these little imperfections; you know the fellows don't mean any harm by it.

IN THE DEPTHS OF WOE.

Now, Aunt Lucy, that's too bad! I know if it hadn't been for you I could have persuaded ma to let me go into mourning when poor Aunt Clara died; and you know I look better in black than anything else.

"To put on the emblems of sorrow when the heart does not mourn is a mere mockery, particularly when the only object is to make yourself look pretty," did you say? Why, Aunt Lucy! you just talk as if I didn't care a bit for Aunt Clara's memory. Of course I didn't cry when I heard of her death, but you know the reason very well. You know I can't bear to cry, because it always makes my nose swell up so and look so red, and my eyes get all bleary and look as if they were bound in pink tape. So of course I never cry, no matter how deeply my feelings are affected. But mourning is such a becoming dress to almost every one; it gives a girl such a pensive air, especially if the crape is deep and worn in thick folds. Mrs. Bell wouldn't lay it off for anything, although everybody knows she didn't care a snap about her husband, and they quarrelled like cat and dog when he was alive. But she knows she

looks better in mourning than in colors; and I don't blame her for keeping it on. Which would you put on—blue or pink bows—down the front of this dress? I haven't had it on since Nell Smith's wedding. Poor creature! Isn't it too horrid, the way she was taken in by that wretch of a fellow? Only married two weeks, when he absconded with all her jewelry! Just to think of losing that lovely necklace! And now here she's at home again, and her father is so in debt that they'll have to give up their house, and she'll have to earn her own living. Isn't it awful?

"You think her sad fate ought to be a warning to other girls who are so eager and ready to take up with entire strangers, and that half the pretended lords and fops who flock to our fashionable summer resorts are mere adventurers and gamblers, who come to this country to be toadied over by silly Americans!"

That hint don't fit me, Aunt Lucy, for I never had a nobleman for a beau in all my life; but I did think it was strange that Nell Smith should catch a real, live Russian nobleman, when there were so many other girls here, ten times better looking, who would have to put up with plain Americans. But, dear me! I wouldn't want to be gulled like she was, and have to come back home and take in sewing or washing, or something to keep soul and body together. Really, I don't know what that poor thing *will* do; for she can't sew any better than our little Jessie, and

a kitten could teach school as well as she could, and I know she wouldn't be able to give music- or drawing-lessons, although her father has spent ever so much money to have her taught; and nobody will want to marry her, of course: so you can imagine just what an awful predicament she's in, poor soul!

"If pa were to die to-morrow, and leave his family penniless, you think I would be as helpless and incompetent as Nell Smith?"

Humph! I suppose I could get married easy enough. Jack Bayne would take me if I was as poor as Job's turkey, and think he'd made a good bargain. But I'd have to be on the verge of starvation before I'd accept him, for he dresses *so* horrid,—the old-style coat, with short skirts, you know; and then he parts his hair away down low on the side, too.

Or that little Nach, that clerks in the drug-store. Pshaw! I could get *him* by merely crooking my finger. He's an awful sticking-plaster, to be sure; and no matter what entertainment is being held, he always tries to get in an invitation before the other fellows; and I believe, as pa says, that he spends at least half of his salary on me. The other half I guess he invests in photographs of himself, for he brings me a new one about every two weeks, done up in expensive style. I've tried my best to get rid of him; but I can't do it without offending him, and if I did that I wouldn't get any more lovely bouquets to carry to parties, nor all the late magazines, nor

any of the little presents he's always sending me, for I never had a more generous beau; but he's so terribly ugly in the face. Still, if I had no money to buy clothes with, nor any home, I *could* manage to put up with him, I suppose.

You say "the children of the poorest people in this country are the most fortunate in one sense, for they are taught from their cradle they must either work or starve; and the daughters of the wealthy classes, who are raised in idleness, are the ones really deserving of pity and commiseration?"

Goodness gracious, Aunt Lucy! you seem to think nobody can be happy unless they know how to work at something. That's just the way old Professor Strong goes on. He says the present manner of bringing up girls is radically wrong, and that if those reformers who are howling for female suffrage, and bemoaning the evil times into which we are fallen, would revolutionize the whole system of female education, they might do the world and future ages much good. He says the majority of the better class of people are content with a superficial education for their girls, and consider a few shallow accomplishments as a sufficient substitute for a thorough knowledge of business, such as they give their sons; that they do not have them taught or perfected in any one branch whereby they could earn a living, if necessary, and be independent of their male relations; and that when reverses come, every avenue of em-

ployment being closed against them on account of their inefficiency, they rush into unloving marriages as the only outlet from a life of poverty.

Isn't he an old blatherskite? It fairly makes me sick to hear him prate about such things. I guess if he was a girl he'd want to have a good time as well as the rest of us.

REVEALS A TRUISM.

WHAT miserable weather!—nothing but rain, rain, rain for two whole days, and not the ghost of a chance to get out and show one's new spring clothes! I had intended as much as could be to go to church last Sunday; but of course it had to pour down in torrents, just because I wanted to wear my new hat. It certainly is the sweetest thing I ever had on my head, and I can't see why pa should grudge the expense, when he can see how becoming it is to me. But men are so peculiar,—they think girls ought to wear the same bonnet forever and amen, no matter whether the shape changes or not; he said it had only been a few months since he had given ten dollars to pay for my winter hat, and now here I was asking for nine more for another one, and he wondered why I couldn't have my old hats trimmed over, instead of buying new ones every time. The idea!

Why, my last summer hat has a different kind of a rim entirely from the kind that are worn now, and all the new trimming on the globe wouldn't make it look fashionable; but men never consider these things,—that is, old men. Ma talks about Flora Adams's economy! Why, no one could hire me to wear such dowdy-looking things as she does. The other day I saw her with a new suit, as I supposed, and she looked tolerably well at a distance, but when I got nearer I discovered it was her everlasting old gray mohair fixed over. I told ma about it, but she pretended she thought it was highly commendable in Flora, and showed she had both taste and good sense, to make her clothes last so long and look so well. But, mercy! if I couldn't look like other people, I wouldn't try to look at all.

Ma says it isn't the costliest wardrobes that are the prettiest or the most becoming, and that a girl can be just as attractive and agreeable if she dresses plainly and inexpensively, as if she put all she owned on her back; but that is all ma knows about it. There never was a greater mistake. The fellows all like to pay their devotions to a fashionable, stylish girl, even if she's a regular ninnyhammer, better than to one whose clothes are a little out of date. Just think how all our fellows toadied over those girls from New York who visited Mary Davis last summer; and it was only because they dressed in the latest agony and were reported to be wealthy. There

wasn't a day that they weren't invited by the gentlemen to go riding, picnicking, or something, and Mary Davis told me they had more calls and attentions in the three weeks they were here than all the other girls in town put together. And it was just their nice clothes did it, for I never met such dull, stupid, insipid creatures in all my life, and so terribly homely! one of them all speckled up with red freckles. And yet, at a party, when those girls came sailing in, all jewelry and laces and city-made dresses, all the fellows in the room were frantic for an introduction, and were bowing, and scraping, and smiling around them like a set of fools.

We girls weren't sorry when they left town, you bet! But I wasn't jealous of them, that's sure, even if old Mrs. Jones did say so. Humph! she's mad because when her nephew was here she overheard me making fun of his pantaloons; but that shows how little sense she has, for nobody with any gumption could expect a girl to be sweet and polite to a great strapping six-footer just from the country, who wore pantaloons an inch too short,—and he'd never even heard of Tennyson's Maud, either! Gracious! I wouldn't marry the richest man in the world, if he was that dumb!

I wouldn't care if such a fellow as that *would* catch me at work, for he'd think nothing of it; but it was an awful mortification to have ma tell Dick Scott that I couldn't see him, the other morning, because I was

busy in the kitchen. She might have said I was sick or not at home; I'd have done that much for her, willingly. I wouldn't have had him see me for anything in the world, though, for I had my front hair in curl-papers, and no collar on, and my old brown lustre with the flounces all torn and hanging at the back widths, and I looked like the very Old Nick. Ma says she wishes he *had* caught me with that rig on, and made me ashamed of my appearance; that there is nothing so detestable as to see a woman slopping about her morning work in greasy, soiled finery, and the kitchen is no place for overskirts and trails. Well, I don't know that it is; but I don't believe in making up even a calico suit without trimming, even if she does say that a plain one, if it be *clean*, looks better than a soiled one full of furbelows. She thinks the girls of this generation have no sense of what is appropriate in matters of dress; that they rig themselves up in party-toilets to go to church and to funerals, and on the street they look like opera-singers and theatrical performers dressed for the stage; and she laments that American mothers will tolerate such breaches of good taste and good sense. Wonder how she thinks the aforesaid mothers are going to help it?

WITH MALICE PREPENSE.

Oh, Sue! I have the funniest thing to tell you. One of the old maid Howells has a beau! Isn't it too rich that any man should fancy either of those antiquated females? He's a widower, with five children, and is really a nice-looking man. He's Miss Annie's lover, and you would just die laughing to see how she's taken to primping and fixing up since his arrival; you know she must be twenty-five, at least! He's stopping down at the hotel, and spends his afternoons and evenings over at the Howells'; in the mornings he saunters around by himself, and puts in his time as well as he can away from his adorable Annie, for you know they wouldn't stop their usual routine of work, and methodical regularity of doing things, if the President himself were to come courting: so, as *they* will not receive morning visits from him, *I* have taken pity on him, and try to keep him from getting lonely until the two ancient maidens get rigged for the afternoon. Day before yesterday I saw him going up their steps, and he had hardly time to ring the bell before his dulcinea appeared, dressed in a bran new alpaca, and actually the old thing looked real nice. She grabbed him by the hand, and

pulled him in quickly, for fear some other girl would get a glimpse of him. I happened to have on my new light suit, and a white, ruffled apron with pockets in it,—that jaunty one, that Aunt Lucy says makes me look so childish,—my whole wardrobe the very essence of "sweet simplicity," you know,—and I concluded I'd make an errand over to Howells', just to worry them a little; so I told ma I'd carry home their Church Magazine, if she had finished it. She didn't know what I was up to, or she wouldn't have consented so readily. I didn't go in the front door, for I thought they'd see me coming, and Miss Annie would come to the door herself, likely, and thank me sweetly for bringing the book, but wouldn't let me in; so I went around to the side door, and was just in the act of tapping, when Mr. Spencer's big dog bounced over the fence and rushed up to me. Of course I screamed loud enough to be heard a mile, and made a motion to strike him with my book, when the horrid thing got my dress skirt between his teeth and was going to devour me. I shrieked louder than ever, when the side door opened, and the old maids, followed by the widower, came to see what on earth was the matter. Miss Nanny ran for the broom, and her sister said shoo! shoo! in such a prim way that I could scarcely keep my face straight. The lover, however, just patted the brute a few times on the head, and coaxed him, till he let go of my dress and trotted off to his own yard.

I didn't faint and fall into the arms of my preserver and be so romantic as that, you know; but I tried to look interestingly agitated, and sank into one of the seats on the portico, and assured him I was under *so* many obligations for his kindness that I hardly knew how to express my gratitude; but that if he ever was attacked and bitten by an animal to send for me, and I'd nurse him and take care of him. Annie and her sister looked perfectly aghast,—thought I was pretty "fresh," I guess; but it seemed to amuse the widower, for he said the offer was so tempting that he might get bitten on purpose, but I was rather young to be much of a nurse.

"Young, indeed!" said I. "I was eighteen last August." I knew that would "get" the Howells, when we began to talk of ages.

"Weren't they jealous because I engaged so much of their beau's attention," did you say?

Oh! to be sure; delightfully jealous. I never enjoyed anything more in my life. Nanny's eyes fairly snapped, and Annie, seeing that I was monopolizing too much of the conversation, coolly took the book out of my hand, and thought I ought to go home and lie down awhile to quiet my nerves. You know that hint was so broad I couldn't help but take it: so I skipped down the path, with my hands in the pockets of my apron, like the picture of a Spanish girl that I saw the other day, and left them to pick me to pieces the minute my back was turned. In-

deed, before I was out of the gate, I overheard him say, "She's a piquant little creature, isn't she?" and Nanny sniff up her nose and say, "I should say *frivolous*, rather than piquant!" Did you ever? Well, then, the best of it is that I made such a favorable impression on the old fellow that bright and early the next morning, as I was out in the yard, he happened to pass along, on purpose, you know, and of course I bowed, and then he stopped, and we had quite a little chat. It was really one of the most exciting flirtations I've had for a good while. In the afternoon, instead of going to Howells' at the usual hour, he came over here, and made an engagement to ride with me the next morning; he stayed about an hour and a half, and I played and sang for him all the love-songs I could think of.

"What's his name," did you say? Let me see; 'tis Riggs, or Jiggs, or something like that: the name isn't of much importance, you know, if your object is only a short flirtation. Then, he came this morning and took me riding, and wanted to make an engagement for this evening. Widowers always rush things so, you know: he inquired in a roundabout way if I was fond of children, and seemed delighted when I told him I just doted on the little darlings. Imagine me as step-mamma, Sue, spanking the three little Jiggs around every morning! He was so much encouraged by my assurances of regard for children, that he went on to tell me how taken he was with me

from the first; that there was something so refreshing and exhilarating in my nature, that a man would be blessed who could have such a companion for life. I almost felt sorry for the poor old dunce, to think how he was fooling himself; but then he deserved to be punished for his presumption in thinking a young girl could love and devote herself to an old, wrinkled man, forty years old, with five children, and not so very well off, either! What provoked me so was his taking it for granted that I'd accept him, for he asked me if I thought ma and pa would consent to a speedy marriage. I thought it was time to undeceive him then, so I told him I was already engaged to three fellows now, and I believed I wouldn't make any more contracts for the present; if, however, any of them should die, or jilt me, I'd drop him a line, and we'd take his case into further consideration.

When I told ma about it, she said I had committed an actual wrong; I had deliberately planned to get him away from a worthy girl, who would make a good wife, and good mother to his children, and so encouraged and infatuated him as to make him ridiculous, for no other purpose than to have a little fun and wound Anna Howell's heart; but I'd find out some day that the title of coquette is one that no true woman desires to have, and that, in her estimation, the desire to flirt is one of the worst calamities that can befall a girl; for if she has coquetted all her earlier years, and given a little bit of her heart to this

one and that one, by the time she is married she has no heart to give her husband,—nothing but a withered remnant, punctured with a sigh from one lover, an impassioned glance from another, and vows of constancy and words of devotion from a score more. But, dear me! that's as much as girls get from their husbands in return, I'm sure.

AT A FUNERAL.

You don't know what you missed, ma, by not attending the funeral to-day! It was a most elegant affair. The loveliest coffin you ever saw, and wreaths and crosses and anchors, of expensive flowers, stuck everywhere. Of course the corpse didn't look very pretty in the face. The poor thing had been sick so long, you know, and was dreadfully emaciated and yellow, and had such a distressed, contorted look. But, oh! her dress was too sweet for anything!—white satin, with real lace ruches at the neck and wrist. Then her hair was frizzed, and a white spray of flowers on one side; the top of the casket lifted up so that a full-length view could be had; and, don't you think, there were so many people that it took over an hour for the crowd to see her!

"A corpse with its hair in crimping-pins is a dread-

ful mockery, and you think the vulgar display and hollow parade over a dead body, which has now become customary, is revolting," did you say? "That people nowadays go to a funeral as they would to a show or a theatre; they don't go to mourn with those who mourn, but to gratify a coarse curiosity as to the amount of glitter and gewgaws on the coffin, to watch how the mourners 'take it,' to comment on the way the dead is dressed, and to see a big display generally."

Fudge, ma! Your tastes are too Quakerish for this age of progress! What's the use of dying and having a funeral, if you can't make a success of it? It's all your friends can do for you, and they might as well have it stylish; and then, besides, it's a *comfort* to the friends to know that everything goes off handsomely. To be sure, there are some people who try to cut a splurge when their relations die, that have to cheat somebody to do it, as pa said about the Robinsons when they buried their sister-in-law last week. They wanted to have their funeral as nice as anybody's, and ran up an awful bill of expenses. Pa says he thinks it must have cost nearly two hundred dollars, and they are in debt all over town, and have dreadful hard work to get along. He predicts they'll suffer this winter for actual necessaries, and will wish when they're hungry that they hadn't robbed the living for the sake of keeping up with other people in having a big show over the dead.

But la! I think it would have been mean not to have given her a stylish funeral. Just think what they owe to her! Why! there never was an overskirt or a polonaise in the Robinson family till she went there! Those children had always gone with their dresses made plain waists and straight skirts, without even an inch ruffle on them; but in less than two months after she married into the family you could notice the improvement, and when they went by here on their way to school, with their sashes and puffs and panniers, no one would have ever dreamed they were poor people. Why, even the old lady got to powdering and wearing pin-backs. Oh, I tell you, they'll miss her more than if every other member of the family had died! I heard the undertaker was awful mad because he couldn't collect the ninety dollars they owed him for the coffin. Pa says he don't feel very sorry for him, though, because an undertaker can have things all his own way, and charge what he pleases, and nobody likes to dispute his bill on such a delicate matter; and so people put up with exorbitant charges, rather than appear disrespectful to their dead friends. But he says if the custom of costly funerals continues, poor people will have to quit dying, and let the rich monopolize that luxury. But, cost or no cost, I want a fuss made over me when I'm buried. I don't want to be stuck down in the ground in a plain coffin. I want to have the funeral in the church, where everybody can get a

chance to see, and I want the pall-bearers to wear floral badges. Don't you think it would be pretty? Then I want the brass band to march to the cemetery and play the dead march, and——

"Wouldn't I like a steam-engine and the fire-companies, too," did you say?

Pshaw! Now you're trying to be funny, I suppose; but *I* don't see where the witty part is.

GETS MARRIED.

I'M *so* delighted to see you, Bell; you *don't* know how sorry I was that you were ill and couldn't be here at the wedding, and I told ma as soon as I got back from my trip I would write for you to come over, for I knew you'd be dying to see my dresses and things. Just come in my room and look at them. My *trousseau* was just sweet, Belle, a great deal more complete than Sallie Stuart's. In fact, I didn't see anything any nicer while I was gone. I have six new silks, and two of the *darlingest* walking-suits you ever laid your eyes on. There! isn't that *écru* evening dress perfectly lovely? And gloves and boots to match everything! And oh! I must show you my laces,—aren't they divine? You thought it was to be Charley Cooke, all the time, didn't you? Mercy!

that was off weeks ago. I liked him well enough, too; but I got tired of him, you know, and then Henri has so much more style. There! you've got the wrong side of that damask sash out. Turn it over, and you'll see how pretty it is. Well, as I was going to say, I wouldn't have been married so soon (you know it's so stupid to have to be tied to the same fellow all the time) if it hadn't been that all my coterie were getting married, and I didn't want to be the last one, you know. It's so much nicer to be perfectly free; but then it is understood between Henri and methat I'm to waltz with whom I please, and he is not to get "huffy" if he sees Colonel Downing or any other gentleman fanning me or promenading, and I won't interfere with his arrangements at the club, or any of his little pleasures; so I think we'll get along together right nicely.

Have you seen Blanche Blowout since her marriage? Wasn't she lucky! She met the count when she was at Saratoga last season, and managed her cards well, and now here she is, just literally rolling in wealth,—has a box at the opera, and owns a magnificent set of diamonds. Some people are *so* fortunate.

"You think a girl anything but fortunate who marries a decrepit, feeble man, old enough to be her grandfather," did you say, ma?

Oh, that's all nonsense! to be sure, there was a good deal of difference in their ages,—she was nineteen and he is over eighty; but, dear me! such

matches take place every day, and any reasonable person can put up with a few wrinkles, and false teeth, and a bald head, if they can own such an establishment as Blanche does; besides, he won't last very long, for he's had two strokes of paralysis already, and another one will be sure to take him off, and then just think how she can enjoy his money!

Belle, in that small box at your elbow you'll find the necklace Henri gave me. Isn't it handsome? I'm glad he chose pearls, for they're my favorites, next to diamonds. Oh! did I tell you the church was decorated with natural flowers the night of the wedding? Everybody said it looked splendid; but of course you saw a description of the whole affair in the papers, for Henri had two reporters there. Then we had the reception at home, and started right away on our tour, and were gone five weeks.

"Going to housekeeping?" Not much, I thank you, my dear. We'll stay a short time at Henri's father's, and then go to boarding at one of the hotels, I suppose.

"You say, ma, that you like the old-fashioned plan of young people settling down in a home of their own as soon as they are married, even if it is a cottage of but six rooms, and think it's a bad idea to raise a family in the atmosphere of hotel life?"

Oh, gracious! Raising a family! Just listen to her, Belle! Oh, ma, but you *are* verdant! Nobody raises families nowadays but the Irish. But as for

going to housekeeping in a little coop of a place, of course we *couldn't* do *that;* but we expect to have an establishment of our own when Henri's father dies, or perhaps sooner, if he gives us a suitable one. But you haven't seen the wedding presents yet, Belle. I got some lovely silver. Ma, take her to the *buffet* and show it to her while I am dressing for dinner. What was that observation? Ah! I overheard you, my dear, asking ma if I was happy! Why, I suppose I am; only, of course, I'd like to have a full set of diamonds.

A FASHIONABLE MOTHER.

MEN are certainly the most perverse creatures in the world! Now, William ought to have sense enough to know that I must dress Katy like other girls of her age. How would it look, I'd like to know, and how mortifying to the poor little thing, to compel her to wear a dress without a particle of knife-plaiting or puffing about it? Why, it would be simply ridiculous; and I'm not going to have the child's feelings wounded, and have her look like a fright, just to please her father. He says the silliest and at the same time the saddest sight in the world to him is a little girl decked out in fashionable finery, with the pert airs and mincing manners that seem to be the inevitable sequence, and which are more ridiculous than the simper and affectation of a belle of the period. But *I'm* not afraid of Katy's ever becoming pert or forward, like those odious Lovestyle children across the way. She has too much sense for that.

I do wish men were not so old-fashioned in their notions of girls' dress! I'm sure nothing could be lovelier than Katy's new suit; and if William wasn't so blinded by prejudice, he wouldn't say she looked

deformed in her long shirred overskirt, with the large puff behind. The idea of calling it a "hunch"!—it just shows how little taste he has. When it is pinned back real tight, of course it is pretty hard work to sit down; but she'll have to get used to it, as everybody else does. I can't see why there should be so many comments made about the present style of dress. One can't even pick up a newspaper without seeing some sarcastic fling at the shape of feminine knees and hip-bones, and the difficulty a woman experiences in walking when she is strapped back within an inch of her life, etc., written probably by some wretch of a man who is too stingy to dress his wife respectably. Well, they might as well reserve their space for something more sensible; because women won't be wheedled into dressing like nuns for the best man in creation.

William says if American women want to make themselves conspicuous, and a target for all manner of indelicate remarks, he supposes that heaven and earth won't prevent them; but to load a little child down with embroideries and flutings and ruffles and puffs, is outrageous; that the coming generation of women will be so weak-backed and delicate that life will be a burden of suffering, and the foolish, fashionable mothers of this country ought to shudder at the years of misery in store for their daughters, for which they, and they only, are responsible.

Just because he happened to feel the weight of

Katy's cashmere dress last winter, he's had the "heroics" on that point ever since: the three flounces and the double fluting *did* make the skirt rather heavy, to be sure; but that was no reason why a man should go into conniptions, and argue that she would grow hollow-chested and diseased because it took all her strength to carry her clothes. He says she ought to romp and play, and be out in the air every day, making sand pies and wearing bib-aprons, and be a little girl, such as used to exist, instead of being dressed in a flounced polonaise, practising piano-lessons, or crocheting worsted dogs. Humph! In two days her face would be covered with freckles as big as nutmegs, if I'd follow her father's advice. He don't reflect that times have changed since the days of Methusaleh, when the girls wore nankeen pantalets and check aprons. He don't reflect that Katy is not a baby any longer, and it would look absurd to see a girl of thirteen chasing butterflies and rolling a hoop! She's a little pale and thin just now, and complains a good deal of headache, but the two new studies she has taken up at school this term account for that. She says those two Lovestyle girls shan't get ahead of her, if it kills her; and I glory in her spunk; but I hope she won't do too much, and get down sick. I think I'll speak to the doctor about her, and have him prepare a strengthening cordial or get her a plaster for her back.

INTERVIEWS THE DOCTOR.

"CUT off Katy's hair?" Why, doctor, I couldn't think of such a thing! All the girls of her age wear their hair in a braid down the back, and of course she wouldn't want to be different from everybody else. She only wears a very, *very* small roll of other hair braided in with her own, to make it look thicker, —hardly half an ounce,—really not as much as the thickness of your finger, doctor! Her own hair is so thin, you know, she is obliged to wear some with it; but I'm confident that isn't the reason she is so troubled with headache. "Spinal disease," did you say? Oh, you just want to frighten me. 'Tis nothing like that, I assure you,—nothing but an ordinary headache; and all she needs is a tonic of some kind, to "tone" up her system, you know. No, indeed! the weight of her clothes has nothing to do with it, either, because she wears straps to the most of her skirts, so that she has nothing resting on her hips but her dress and overskirt; and they are not half nor quarter as heavy as I wear. The pain in her back is not to be wondered at, for it's hereditary. I've had it all my life, and am now wearing two large

plasters, or I couldn't get about at all; and I know I'm good for forty years yet. Therefore I don't consider it an alarming symptom in Katy. She hasn't much of an appetite, it is true; but of course it is not to be expected that a growing girl of thirteen will eat like a hired man on a farm. She generally takes a cup of coffee and a cracker for breakfast; then she don't seem to care whether she has anything more till the next morning or not. She's fond of sweet things, like all other children, and would eat cake from morning till night, if I'd let her; but I know too much about hygiene and the laws of health to allow her to eat stuff that will make her pimply and ugly.

"Out-door exercise!" Yes, there I'll agree with you; but, if you believe me, doctor, Katy complains that her walk to and from school nearly tires her to death, and it seems cruel to insist on making her walk any more than that; and then, too, she couldn't have time, if she had the inclination, for she puts in every moment getting her lessons. Why, she'd study half the night, if I'd let her. She has now begun algebra, in addition to her other studies, and she wants to enter the philosophy class next term. So you see she's very smart for her age. There are not many girls as far advanced as she is, if I do say it myself.

"You think the cramming process is death to girls, and if I want Katy to be a healthy, happy

woman, I must take her out of school for a year or two, at least!" Why, Dr. Sage! you surely can't be in earnest! Katy would never consent to get behind her classes; 'twould really kill the child to do it; indeed it would. You don't know how ambitious she is. But I'll talk to her, and see what she'll say. Ah! you're going? Well, if Katy doesn't feel better soon, I'll see you again, doctor. Good-morning. There, thank fortune! you're gone! What an obstinate, rude old codger he's getting to be! I do wonder if he thinks I'll be foolish enough to cut off Katy's hair, when she's just got that new gold arrow to wear on it! Indeed I shall do no such thing. I don't think I'll employ him any more, at any rate: he's getting too old to practise, and has too many ridiculous, old-fogy notions to suit any progressive person. Anybody with half an eye can see that all Katy needs is some tincture of iron, or something or other, to strengthen her.

HER VICTIM.

You do look beautiful to-night, Katy! and, the dear knows, you ought to, for I've worked myself nearly to death to get your dress done for you to wear to this party, and to put on that double row of shirring is no small job, I can tell you. I wish now that I'd had time to put another row on; but I expect it would have made me totally blind; for, as it is, I've almost ruined my eyesight in making the narrow plaiting on your overskirt and basque.

Now, child, for mercy's sake, don't sit down to-night and get yourself all mussed up: of course, if you get *very* tired you can lean back against something; but stand sideways, if you do, or you will have the puffs all mashed out of shape, and then what'll you look like?

What a pity I got your sleeves so long! Your bracelets don't show at all. I've a notion to put a little bit of powder on your face, dear; I don't approve of it as a general thing, of course, but I know the Lovestyle girls will be powdered up as white as wax, and I'm not going to have you put in the shade

by them. Mrs. Lovestyle needn't be telling me their complexions are natural, for I know better. They are blondes, to be sure, and with such taffy-colored hair and blue eyes they would be apt to have fair skins; but you can't make me believe they don't use powder occasionally.

There! stand off and turn around, slowly, so that I can see how your sash looks. It's a lovely piece of ribbon, and I know Mrs. Lovestyle was awfully provoked this afternoon when she compared it with what she bought for Flora and Hattie. Theirs is at least half an inch narrower, and not near so heavy. If there had been more at the store like this, I believe she would have gone back for it; because it nearly kills her to have any one get anything nicer than her girls. How I hate to see a woman so foolish about her children as she is!

Is it because your feet still hurt you that you are standing so awkwardly, Katy? I was a little afraid that those shoes were too short when you got them; but they match your dress so nicely that it would be too bad to put on your other ones; and I'd try and endure the pain for this evening, dear, if I were you. You can stand on tiptoe sometimes, and that will kind of break them, and ease you for a minute or two, you know: besides, when you get there and get to enjoying yourself you'll forget all about your feet. The heels, being so high and pointed, throw your weight forward on your toes, and that's the cause of

the shoes hurting you; but it spoils the looks of one's foot so much to wear a low heel, or I'd have them partly taken off. Hold still till I arrange your hair a little; and don't lose my lace handkerchief to-night; hand it here, till I put some perfumery on it. Well, now I guess you're all ready to go. Be sure and hold your shoulders up; and don't lean back against your dress, whatever you do. Oh! I almost forgot to give you your cough medicine. There, Katy, take a good big dose, for I don't want you to be going around to-morrow again with the sore throat, and have your father blaming me for letting you go to the party to-night. Just throw your veil lightly over your head, so you won't disarrange your frizzes, and hurry along, if you are going to stop for the Love-style girls, and don't keep them waiting. There's your pa coming in; ask him to open the gate for you.

"You predict Katy will have diphtheria," did you say, William, "from going out on such a cold night with only a thin gauze veil over her head; that she'd better have every frizzle flattened out straight than run the risk of injuring her health?"

Oh! it isn't going to hurt her any. I hope you wouldn't want the child to go there rumpled up and out of shape! I'm sure, after all the pains I've taken, and made myself nearly sick, to get her ready, I want her to present as good an appearance as the rest of the girls. I declare, after I've finished a suit for

Katy, I'm so worked down that I almost wish ruffles and puffs would go out of fashion and I'd never see one again.

"You say I'm not compelled to follow the fashion, and that something simple and girlish would be in better taste, and more in accordance with Katy's age, than all the fashionable gewgaws and unsightly bunches behind, in which silly mothers will persist in making their little girls hideous; and, besides, you don't approve of letting her attend parties where she'll be kept up till a late hour, when she should be in bed, resting?"

Dear me, William, the child must have *some* recreation; and she don't have time after school to have play-hours, as you call them. There's her music, you know; she has to practise that, of course; and Professor Thumpem is giving her some very difficult pieces now, and she's putting in an hour extra in the mornings on that last instrumental piece, to get it learned before the Lovestyle girls find it out; then her algebra and philosophy lessons are so hard that she always brings her books home to study in the evenings; and, besides all that, she's embroidering a set of mats, and an ottoman cover, for the church fair that is to be held next month. So you can see for yourself that she has precious little time to fool away in the manner you advise.

"You'd rather see Katy robust and hearty, enjoying a game of blindman's-buff, than have her the

scrawny, pale-faced leader of forty philosophy classes," did you say?

Blindman's-buff! How you talk! Why, girls don't play such rude games any more. *That* shows you're away behind the times, William!

NEIGHBOR JONES'S DUCK SUIT.

A POPULAR writer in a recent work gives as an illustration of wifely pride and devotion a woman who washed and ironed her husband's single white duck suit every night through the whole long, hot summer, that hubby might go to his place of business each morning done up as fresh as a rose!

Such things sound well and look very pretty on paper, doubtless; but we don't believe that homage like that is demanded from any wife; and, further, we don't believe any husband thinks half as much of his wife if she is so ready to make a slave of herself for him. At all events, what she may thus gain in his gratitude she is sure to lose in his admiration; and his admiration, after all, is her strongest hold upon him, and the safest guarantee of his continued regard.

This, perhaps, sounds selfish and cold-blooded; but we must deal with human nature as we find it, not as we would like it; and if it is true that the world estimates us at our own valuation of ourselves, this truth becomes doubly forcible when brought into the everyday private life of husband and wife. Now,

we insist that neighbor Jones's wife was not only a great dunce for baking herself as red as a lobster over the hot stove and ironing-board every summer night, to get up that immaculate suit for that immaculate husband, since she would use more fuel in two weeks than would pay for another suit, but neighbor Jones himself wouldn't respect and love her as much for being content to make a washerwoman of herself, even for his sake; and we warrant, if the whole truth were known, that he sometimes grumbled under his breath because she didn't get the coat quite stiff enough in the sleeves, or iron the vest without a wrinkle,—so prone are we poor mortals to be exacting when we think we dare to be.

Probably, when Mrs. Jones began that diurnal purification of her lord's garments, it was under many protests from neighbor Jones. He wouldn't hear the subject broached at first; he wouldn't let his dear little wife do such hot, hard work after night on his account. No, indeed! he'd wear his duck suit a whole week first. But by and by the protestations grew feebler and feebler, until they died away altogether, and long before the dog-days he had become so accustomed to going away rigged in his spotless white every morning, that he felt almost as if he had been wronged in some way if they were not just ready to step into when he rose. What he deprecated at first soon became a necessity, and, like many another man, when he found she was willing to work

he let her work, and only wondered she didn't do more!

Such instances are not rare; unfortunately, they are so common as not to excite much comment; but none the less are they pitiable, although in almost every case the woman alone is at fault, for the average husband is really not so bad by nature but that he can be moulded as the wife wills. There is my friend Mrs. B., for example, who began with humoring her husband at the outset by doing work about the house and premises that properly belongs to man's province. She lifted stoves, or rather dragged them to their places, nailed loose boards on the garden-fence when they needed it, carried wood from the wood-pile, and a thousand-and-one other jobs, that no husband who has a particle of regard for his wife will allow. And now, after ten years of wedded bliss (?), she finds herself linked to a man indifferent and supremely selfish, with ugly habits, that she has fostered and encouraged by her self-abnegation, and which now rise up to make her life miserable.

She was ambitious to improve the state of their finances, and she resolved to discharge her washerwoman and save the dollar by doing it herself. And she keeps on doing it to this day, although she has now a family of five children, and the dimensions of her clothes-line on wash-days might easily lead a stranger to suppose the place a public laundry. But

Mr. B., although strenuously opposing it at first, is perfectly willing now that she shall do it; and, in fact, so well does he appreciate her that he won't wear a shirt that anybody else irons!

Then, in their early married life, she discovered she could easily do the family sewing, including a dozen new shirts for her husband every three or four months, and, although Mr. B. told her he was able and willing to hire a seamstress to do it, she began it, and succeeded so perfectly, and saved Mr. B.'s pocket-book so many dollars to spend in cigars, that in a year or two the seamstress was never more referred to, and he has kindly permitted her to do the sewing for the entire family ever since.

In the mean time she has grown withered and gaunt, from overtaxing her strength and doing the work of two women, and stays at home because he never invites her to go any place with him any more; and, alongside of her healthy, muscular husband, this poor lady looks like a superannuated, angular, maiden aunt, or a youngish old woman trying to keep step with her grown-up son. He used to ask her to go with him to all the concerts, lectures, etc.; but he has given that up long ago. She always had to decline, you know,—had to finish a dress or an apron that very evening, may-be, for one of the children to wear to school the next day; and so he got into the habit of going without her, and finally, also, into that other habit of not asking her, and finding out

that he could enjoy himself quite as well without her.

He admires youth and beauty, and she has grown withered and old. He remarks on Mrs. Such-a-one always looking so well, or Mrs. So-and-so's fine complexion, and she feels almost angry at them for not being faded and sallow like herself. Yes, she began wrong, and it is now too late to do anything but bear the consequences of her own foolishness with as much grace and resignation as she can command.

We must not blame Mr. B. for being stingy, or exacting, or negligent, or indifferent, for she trained him to it. She trained him to lie in bed while she scrambled out in the cold and went to the meat-market for steak on a frosty morning. She trained him to think he couldn't get his clean shirt and socks himself, when he wanted to make his toilet, although he knew in what particular place they were kept as well as she. In short, she trained him to value her simply for her services as a housekeeper, and not as a wife at all. When he married her he took her for a companion, and was willing to make her happy and comfortable,—willing to lighten her domestic burdens by hiring a part; and if she has lost health, beauty, her youthful looks, and her husband's love, it has been her own fault. Begin right. There is the secret.

The want of that little item of knowledge has been

the rock on which many a matrimonial bark has been wrecked; and we solemnly affirm that were we to be married a hundred times—which Heaven forbid!—we would never let one of those husbands find out we knew how to drive a carpet-tack or hang a curtain!

A SMALL BOY'S GRIEVANCES.

No. 1.

GRACIOUS, but I wish I was big! 'Taint much fun to be a boy when you've got a mother that's particular 'bout her carpets and things, and makes a fuss if you get one little speck of dirt on your Sunday pants; and I can't bear them knee-pants anyway,—makes a fellow feel just like a girl to wear 'em. Pa says *he* don't think they're a bit pretty, and he knows a boy's legs ain't warm enough with breeches cut short at the knee; but ma *will* have them that way, so that settles the question.

I'd like to have a good time, after I've been in school studying hard all day,—for our first reader has some awful long words in it,—but the minute I step in the door ma sings out, "Johnny, if you want to play, you must go in the kitchen, for I can't let you litter up this room with your toys;" and then, if I go out there, the room is full of Irish girls, talking to our girl, and they don't want me to hear their secrets; or if she's getting supper, I'm sure to be in the way, and that makes Bridget mad, and she whacks me around like old boots: so it's pretty hard to tell what to do

when you ain't wanted anywhere; and if I slip out and play with the boys in the alley, and ma finds it out, I get a switching, and have to go off to bed as soon as I swallow my supper; and I'll be plagued if that's fair!

I wonder where the 'sylum is that ma's always talking about going to? Every time I laugh out loud, or sing, or kick up my heels and make a noise, ma draws a big wrinkle across her forehead, and says, "Do stop that racket, child! If you keep on this way, I'll be in the 'sylum in less'n a month!" But I don't much believe she's going, for the month has been up five or six times, and she ain't gone yet. I wonder who'll comb my hair and wash my neck and ears, if she goes? I hope, whoever it is, they won't rub the wash-rag so hard, and nearly take the skin off. I expect that's the reason I'm getting hard of hearing; though I didn't know till yesterday that I was so deaf; but the way I found it out was: I was in the room when pa and ma were talking about something that Mr. Smith, our Sunday-school superintendent, had done; and pa said he wouldn't put it past him, and ma said she knew he was dishonest, and you couldn't depend on anything he said, and his wife didn't always stick to the truth, either, and she couldn't endure the ugly, yellow old thing; at least, that was the way I understood it. And here it wasn't hardly five minutes till Mrs. Smith came to our house, calling, and pa shook hands with her up to the elbow,

and ma kissed her, just as if she liked her the best kind, and told her she had been wondering why she hadn't been up before, and treated her so awful good that I thought I must have been mistaken; and so, after she went away, I asked ma if she was in earnest when she said Mrs. Smith told stories, and was such a mean old thing; and then she and pa looked at each other, and said my hearing must be getting affected; and if it is, I know it's that crash towel is doing it, and nothing else. I don't think it's right to make a boy deaf by washing and rubbing his ears so much.

Sometimes I think ma don't care very much about me, although she always tries to dress me nicer than Mrs. King dresses her boys; but when any ladies come here to visit, and bring their children along, and anything gets broke, I always have to take the blame for it. I've never liked Charley Blair since he knocked that vase over and smashed it, and ma trimmed my jacket, as she calls it, after he was gone! and here it wasn't me at all that broke it; but I s'pose it wouldn't have been polite to have scolded Charley right before Mrs. Blair, and so ma said, very pleasantly, it didn't make a bit of difference; the vase didn't amount to anything any way; and then, after they'd gone home, she turned in and trounced me like sixty! I owe Charley Blair a pounding for the one I got, and one of these days, when his big brother's gone away, and I meet him around the corner, alone,

I'll give him one that he'll remember, I bet! Then, again, once in a while I find out that ma and pa think lots of me. For instance, the time old Mr. Fishback caught me stoning his chickens, and boxed my ears for it, ma and pa were awful mad, and said he'd better keep his hands off o' me in the future, or they'd persecute or go to law with him; and then, the next day, when I ran his old red rooster nearly to death, and he dragged me home by the collar, and told ma that wasn't the first time I had annoyed him, that I'd often chased his cow till the milk wasn't fit to drink, ma said he needn't come to her with any such tales; that a son of *hers* wouldn't do such a thing as that, and it would be more to his credit to attend to his own affairs hereafter, and let his neighbors' children alone! My! but I was tickled! I expected to get into trouble when he told about the cow; but I don't s'pose the few times I chased her hurt her a bit, and all Mr. Fishback wanted was to set pa and ma against me; and to try to prejudice parents against their own children is what I call a pretty mean trick in any man!

A SMALL BOY'S GRIEVANCES.

No. 2.

I WISH ma would let me go over to play with Ned Wilkins to-day! We always have such jolly times over there, and they don't mind having little boys come there to play with their boys, for Mrs. Wilkins said so. Ma says she don't see why I can't be contented at home; that our house, and everything we have, is nicer than Wilkins's; but she don't know how lonesome it is here for me, all alone,—because Tom is a young man, now, and is always writing notes to the girls and reading poems, and says he can't be bothered with a little shaver like me; and over at Ned's there's so many children of 'em that they can all have fun together. Ma wonders Mrs. Wilkins isn't wearing a strait jacket in the 'sylum, to have such a bedlam let loose on her every evening when those children get home from school; but ma never was a little boy herself, and of course she don't know how nice it is to play "tag," and "hop scotch," and all those games, with a lot of other boys.

When I grow to be a man, and have a house of my

own, I'll have a big swing right in the middle of the parlor,—no! I believe I won't have any parlor. I hate parlors. The curtains are always down, and the shutters closed, as if there was going to be a funeral, or a mite society, and your mother never lets you go in without telling you to be sure and not rub your hands on the wall-paper, and calls after you to know whether your boots are clean, so they won't soil the carpet; or follows you, to see that you don't lean your head back against the chair-tidies, or step on the rug, or handle the pretty things on the mantel-piece, nor anything at all, but just breathe, and not very much of that.

If I was big, I wouldn't let the big boys treat the little boys good just long enough to get 'em to carry in a bucket of coal, or take a note and wait in the cold for an answer, and snub 'em all the rest of the time, like Tom does me.

I wouldn't stuff the preacher on frosted fruit-cake, and preserves, and pickled peaches, and roast turkey, when he came, and tell the children such things were unhealthy and they couldn't have any. I wouldn't let 'em go to school to a teacher who would take their apples away from them to keep till recess, and then forget to give 'em back, and eat 'em herself on the sly, like Miss Persimmons did yesterday; no, nor I wouldn't let the teacher make 'em sit next to a boy who has warts, either. I wouldn't make 'em go to Sunday-school and church both on the same day, and

be a jogging and shaking 'em every few minutes to keep 'em awake, to hear what the minister was saying about the revival of the Brooklyn scandal. I wouldn't always be in a big hurry to get down town to meet a man, when my little boy wanted to sit on my knee after supper and have me tell him a nice story about Jack the giant-killer! Nor I wouldn't be forever telling him to sit still on the sofa, for fear he'd break the springs; that only naughty boys made a noise in the house, and he must always keep perfectly quiet, and try to grow up to be a good man, like Moodiansankey.

I believe I'd like to get acquainted with Moodiansankey, just so I could ask him if his mother didn't always have to cover a good deal of grape jam over his pills when he took 'em, just like other women do for their boys! And I'd ask him if he and Mrs. Moodiansankey ever went off to a big party and left their little boy home with a cross nurse-girl, who scared him to death telling him about a big black bear that was coming out of the closet to eat him up if he didn't go straight to sleep!

When I get big I'm going to have apple-dumplings and sweet cake for dinner every day, and when that big, fat Mr. Carson comes to our house I'll eat up everything, and just leave him one little, tiny slice of cake on the plate, like he did here the other day, when ma got so mad at pa for bringing him home to dinner. He didn't act as if he'd had a square meal for

a month, for ma said so; but I think she was a good deal to blame for his eating so much, for she was always saying, "*Do*, Mr. Carson, have some more of the chicken," or, "Mr. Carson, won't you try another roll?" or, "This is your favorite cake,—let me help you to another piece;" and he thought she meant it all for the truth, so he went in on his muscle, and gobbled up nearly everything. Ma was polite to pa, too, but whenever she thought there wouldn't be enough victuals to go 'round, she'd always reach under the table and tramp on his toe for him to say he didn't wish any of it. Oh, but I was in hopes she'd tramp on Mr. Carson's foot by mistake! for I heard him tell pa he suffered awfully from corns.

He needn't be patting me on the head, and telling ma that I'm a remarkably smart boy, and have a head shaped exactly like Daniel Webster's, and then turn in and eat seven biscuit and all the gravy!

No; nor when I get big I ain't going to have my throat rubbed with old greasy liniment, and wear a flannel rag on my neck, and take pepper-tea, whenever I catch cold. No, sir! I'll just put a little hot water and sugar in the bottom of a tumbler, and fill it up with some good stuff out of a bottle on the top shelf, like pa does every morning.

WOMEN JEWS.

By this term we do not mean Jewish women,—those pretty black-eyed daughters of Israel, conspicuous chiefly for their inordinate fondness for cheap jewelry and proportionate distaste for swine's flesh. No; it is not of these we would speak, but of that class of women, be they olive-skinned descendants of Abraham or pale-faced American Gentiles, who habitually ask and expect a dealer to "fall" a few cents on the stated price of every article they purchase. Their rule is, by dint of arguing, coaxing, and what might be termed a mild species of bullying, to make one dollar buy as much as two; and they act as if the business men of whom they buy had been transformed for the time being from staid, respectable citizens, into ghouls and sharks, ready to snatch and rob them of all their possessions, and their only safety consisted in outwitting and getting ahead of them by being as rude and unladylike as possible. If calico is selling at eight cents, how they will haggle and argue, and feel aggrieved if they don't get it for seven cents per yard! how they will have the clerks frisking from one pile of goods to

another, pulling them down, strewing the counters, and turning things upside-down generally, while they finger over the different pieces, pronouncing this pattern "hideous," that one "sweet," and another "tolerably pretty," but objecting to the price of all!

I don't believe that Job, with all his boils and blisters, was as long-suffering, and had his patience tried half as much, as the modern merchant with the average feminine buyer. Sometimes she only comes to "look;" but, mind you, she don't tell *that* part of the story until she has examined and priced everything on the shelves, when, having exhausted the valuable time of the tired shopkeeper, and kept him from other customers, she coolly informs him "she didn't intend to buy to-day, nohow—only just 'round looking to see the different styles." Then, again, it may be a woman who prides herself much on her knowledge of the quality of goods. The polite clerk lays before her stacks of ginghams or cashmeres, as the case may be. She examines them critically; asks if he is sure there are no moth-holes; ravels out a little piece at the end; breaks off a few threads and chews them, to see if they are fast colors; or calls for a match and sets fire to the sample, to detect a mixture of cotton, if it is represented to be all wool; energetically assuring her auditor, meanwhile, that no one need try to palm off poor goods on her for a big price, because she knows just how much it is worth, and if she can't get it at her own price she

won't take it; and she sails majestically out of the store to inflict herself on some other firm. Such transactions are the rule, and not the exception, in dry-goods stores, practised by women, too, who claim to be refined ladies, and of whom we might expect better things. Perhaps this habit of "jewing" down, and trying to get a good bargain, has grown on them unconsciously, and they do not realize that it has assumed proportions so vast as to make them intensely disagreeable to clerks and proprietors alike. Besides, they make nothing by it in the long run. It is true they may, by their pertinacity, actually worry a merchant into letting them have goods occasionally at a less price than he can afford; but once having acquired a reputation for being mean and wanting to drive a hard bargain, they will generally defeat the very end they have sacrificed so much to accomplish.

But, says one, "Humph! I'll not pay any extortionate price that a dealer chooses to ask for his goods!" My dear Mrs. Smallsoul, you are not obliged to do so. This is a free country, you know, and no one can *compel* you to purchase goods at prices you do not like. You can simply do without, or take something not so high-priced—that is all! I would give you the same advice a merchant not long since gave his wife. He was retiring from the business, after a twenty years' experience behind the counter, a period sufficiently lengthy, certainly, to give him an opportunity to know whereof he spoke.

"Rebecca," said he, "if you go into a store to make a purchase, and the article pleases you, and is what you want, *and you have money enough to buy* it, take it; but for heaven's sake don't try to get it by asking the owner to put down the price to suit your pocket-book. Do this, and you will always maintain your self-respect, and have the respect of the man you deal with. Don't make for yourself a name for being little and mean in your dealings, and you will be the gainer; at least you will have the satisfaction of knowing that each clerk doesn't try to get out of the way when you are seen entering the store, hoping to throw on some one else the unwelcome task of waiting on you."

Webster defines the word "jew" as an attempt to cheat or defraud. You may congratulate and pride yourself on your skill and *finesse*, but have you ever thought, madam, that this odious practice is really dishonest and unfair? It is not the woman who chews the samples to test the colors, nor yet Mrs. Smallsoul alone, who is guilty, but *you*, and *you*, whoever you may be, who take the advantage of the protection your sex affords you, in questioning the honesty of every man who has anything to sell, by insinuating that he requires watching, and will cheat you if he can. Remember, if you were a man, you would stand a chance of being booted off the premises, if you were to give expression to such thoughts. It is simply your petticoats that save you. Because

there are sharpers in that as in every other business, and you may at some time have experienced dishonest treatment, it would be as absurd and unjust to suspect all merchants as cheats, as to claim that all women are impure because some have erred.

"MEN WANT WOMEN FOR WIVES."

"MEN who are worth having want women for wives. A bundle of gewgaws, bound with a string of flats and quavers, sprinkled with cologne, and set in a carmine saucer,—this is no help for a man who expects to raise a family of boys on bread and meat. The piano and lace frames are good in their places, and so are the ribbon frills and tassels, but you cannot make a dinner of the former nor a bed-blanket of the latter; and, awful as the idea may seem to you, both dinner and bed-blankets are necessary to domestic happiness. Life has its realities as well as fancies, but you make all its decorations, remembering the tassels and curtains, but forgetting the bedstead. Suppose a man of good sense and good prospects to be looking for a wife: what chance have you to be chosen? You may trap him, but how much better to make it an object for him to catch you! If you should trap and marry an industrious young man, and deceive him, he would be unhappy as long as he lives. So, render yourselves worth catching, and you need no shrewd mother or brother to recommend you and help you find a market."

We find the above floating about in the newspapers, and sometimes endorsed by the sapient Solons who preside over their columns, in such expressions as, "advice worth volumes of fiction and sentimentalism," "true as gospel," etc. Fiddlesticks! While the writer was about it, why didn't he give both sides of the question? Why did he give prominence to the idea that women are vain, dawdling, simpering creatures, whose sole aim is to look pretty and angle for a husband, or, if they have already "caught" one, to render his life miserable, while they bestow their smiles on others? and, keeping silence in regard to man's numerous infirmities, have us believe that he is the prey and victim of woman's wiles? True it is, although it breaks our heart to say it, there are legions of just such female fools in the world as described above; but, so far as our observation goes, we find the sexes balanced in this respect, in about the proportion of six of one and half a dozen of the other.

"Men who are worth having want women for wives," and they generally get them; for no *sensible* man will be attracted by a smirking, befrizzled, walking fashion-plate, any more than a woman of intelligence and real depth of character would think of allying herself with a perfumed, milk-and-water fop. Like seeks like, although there are occasional exceptions to this, as to every other rule; sometimes sadly exemplified even in our greatest men and women,

where husband or wife of brilliant intellect is held down and clogged by the dead weight of a vapid, senseless companion; but these are only the exceptions which prove the rule, and we generally find the male butterfly of society dancing attendance on, and basking in the smiles of, the damsel who thinks it vulgar to wash dishes and bake bread, and who pronounces a man "a perfect love of a fellow," because he wears his broadcloth cut in the latest agony.

His exceedingly "small" talk and airy compliments; the exquisite bow with which he presents her perfumed handkerchief, which she has dropped accidentally on purpose; the untiring devotion he displays in fanning her assiduously for a whole evening, without giving out, pouring into her ear, meanwhile, the tenderest nothings; his slangy talk about his "governor" or the "old man;" his willingness to spend in buggy-rides and ice-creams money that he has had no hand in earning,—money, perhaps, coaxed or cajoled from a weak, fond, widowed mother; his little occasional sprees,—all mark him as the affinity of the addle-pated, ultra-fashionable girl found in every branch of society. There is a bond of union between them it were a pity to disturb. Let them alone,—they are two fools well met.

If all women were such useless creatures we might well deplore and prophesy the speedy dissolution of the happiness of home life; but it is a matter of gratulation, and hope for the future, that there are so

many sensible, practical girls, in whom these sleek popinjays see nothing to admire.

My dear sir, try to divest yourself of that sweet self-love which impels you to conclude, forthwith, when a woman treats you civilly, that she is trying to "trap" you! Don't imagine, when she bestows a smile on you, that she is striving to get possession of that barren thing you call your heart; it is just as likely she is making fun of your pretty little four-haired moustache, while you are misinterpreting her looks and thinking to yourself, "I know she's in love with me." Even if she goes so far as to pin button-hole bouquets on the lapel of your coat, don't be puffed up with vanity and feel sorry you can't be divided bodily, so that all the nice girls might have a piece of you; for, ten to one, while you go whistling down the street, pluming yourself on your imagined conquest, she'll be telling her sister how "awful soft" you are! Or, when you bid her good-night, if she turn away her head, that you scarcely see her face, don't attribute it to some tender emotion she is struggling to conceal, for it is altogether probable that the combined stench of cigar-smoke, patchouli, and cardamom seeds you are redolent of is too much for her olfactories. She may accept your photographs, but you wouldn't feel a bit pleased if you knew she only took them because the handsome frames make nice ornaments for the parlor brackets, would you? No, you are not aware of all this; but as you grow

older you will learn "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy," my young friend. But try to make yourself worthy, and you will find this laughter at your expense turned into hearty endeavors to aid you to be better and nobler. She may not be willing to marry you, even after your reformation, for a true woman asks more of gold and less of dross in the character of the man she weds than you, at your best, can promise; but she will not deny you her friendship, and *that* is surely something of which you might well be proud.

Every intelligent, thinking woman knows that in life the prose outweighs the poetry; that fact preponderates over fancy; and as she runs her eye over her list of male acquaintances, she smiles in derision at the thought of taking for a companion, to battle with life's storms and meet its trials, the scented dandy, the pimply clerk in a millinery store, or the hanger-on of a wealthy father.

Instead of a mass of fashionable vices, covered with an exterior of elegant broadcloth and conventional politeness, a pure, virtuous woman has a right to demand, in a husband, nobility and purity. Purity? Yes, emphatically, yes!

A THOUGHT FOR WOMEN TO PONDER.

"IT seems so *odd* for you to engage a teacher of languages, and go to studying and reciting, like a veritable school-girl," remarked one married lady to another, recently.

By this term "odd," which in this case was merely a polite way of saying "foolish," this lady gave expression to the idea entertained by hundreds of really worthy people, that matrimony necessarily puts a stop to all further intellectual attainments on the part of a woman; in other words, her market is made, and what possible use can she now make of mathematics, or history, or the sciences?—the old-fashioned croakers adding sagely, "If she takes proper care of her house, her husband, and her children, she won't find much time for anything else."

Women themselves are much to blame for this opinion. They yield too easily to the cares that oppress them, and allow themselves to sink into insignificance, often, without a struggle. Indeed, the number of wives who were once brilliant, intelligent, sparkling girls, transformed by a few short years of marriage into prosy, commonplace women, void of

ideas, naturally leads one to regard retrogression as the inevitable result of matrimony; and, setting aside the purely literary circles and coteries of our large towns and cities, when a married woman rises superior to her cares, and gives a part of her time to study and self-culture, it is not strange she should be marked as odd or eccentric, perhaps even accused of being "strong-minded." How absurd to spend hundreds of dollars on a girl's education, only to have it laid away and put out of sight, as a thing that has served its day, as soon as the duties of domestic life begin! What folly to put a big sum in a piano, which stands closed for months at a time, because its owner has failed to "keep up her practice" since she was married, and no longer with skilled fingers can draw from it sweet sounds to enliven the home circle! Of what avail now is the fact that she was once the brightest ornament of the school-room, was quick at figures, had history at her tongue's end, and wrote compositions for all the lazy or incompetent pupils of her acquaintance, if now her talents have become so cobwebbed over from disuse that even letter-writing is looked on as a dreaded task, and she is obliged to reflect long and carefully before she can give a correct answer to the simple question her little boy propounds to her in arithmetic! And yet, of just such follies and absurdities are one-half of our married women guilty. If there were no higher or better reason why wives should not allow their attainments

to rust and die out, it seems to us the plea of economy alone would deter them from burying that which has cost them so much, both of time and money, to acquire.

We are well aware that with the thousand demands on a mother's time,—demands of which even the best husband can form no adequate conception,—it seems an almost hopeless attempt to keep from falling behind and degenerating into a mere machine. With her household to oversee, perhaps unaided by a servant; with the sewing to do for three or four little ones; with a baby crying at her elbow, a woman's chances for intellectual culture are but limited. Even a half-hour snatched from her never-ending round of work seems almost an impossibility. It is only by patience and laborious perseverance, that will not yield to difficulties, that a woman so situated can nullify or counteract the tendencies that draw her backward instead of forward. We do not mean to intimate that the great mass of married women never read. Quite the contrary; but running hurriedly over the local columns of the weekly paper, or skimming the pages of a love-story, interested only to find out what becomes of the heroine, is not sufficient to feed a mind that has once been accustomed to broader fields. A woman's intellect is but slightly stimulated by such pabulum.

The prescribed limits of her home sphere render it necessary that a wife should devote more time to

mental improvement than does her husband, for the reason that he is constantly a pupil in the great school of the world, where his mind is brought in daily contact with the minds of other men, and his faculties constantly sharpened by conversation and interchange of thought and opinion, that adds to his own stock of knowledge. But she, debarred from all this, can accomplish nothing without persistent application. To keep abreast with husband and children in intellectual progress, and hold intact the admiration and respect they bear for her, she must not, *dare* not, let her domestic duties press so heavily that they grind her down. She must remember that her babies will not always be babies; there will come a time, a matter of a few years, perhaps, when she will experience the humiliating fact that they have far outsped her,—shot past and left her behind.

SOLILOQUIES OF AN UNSOPHISTICATED WOMAN.

IT is really too bad that I can't have that new silk that I'd set my heart on! I'm sure we are as able to afford such things as the Joneses, and they have everything they want, no matter what it costs. Harry says when times get better I can have it; but I can't see but that people are as well off now as they ever were. Everybody talks of hard times and the dulness of business, and whenever you see two men together, if you listen, you'll be sure to hear their conversation is all about the money-pressure, and suspensions, and failures; but I don't believe it's half so bad as they make out, because people dress just as much, and live as fashionably and expensively, as they ever did; in fact, there seems to be more display than ever. Why, at the assembly the other night, I couldn't help noticing how elegantly every person was dressed. There were the Bowdon girls, with the loveliest new suits of costly French material, all puffs and laces, with rich gros-grain sashes and satin fans; and Fanny had on a real Valenciennes *fichu*, that cost the dear knows how

much; and yet it was only two or three weeks ago I heard Harry say their father owed him eighty-five dollars, and the old man was so "hard up" it was impossible to get a cent out of him. It seems to me Harry is very easily taken in to believe that story, for if it had been an impossibility to raise that amount he couldn't dress those girls the way he does! Pshaw! The thing doesn't look reasonable. That's about on a par with Mr. Simmons's pathetic story regarding *his* financial trouble. I might be tempted to believe there was some truth in what he says (for the man really does look haggard and distressed lately), if they hadn't given that big party last week; but no one can convince *me* that a man is pushed for money who can make such a magnificent display as the Simmonses did that night. Why, she and the children fairly glittered in silks and jewelry; one would have thought they belonged to a millionaire. Parlors festooned in flowers, and elegant suppers, and extra servants hired for the occasion, don't look as if he was embarrassed in his business, as Harry says he is; but, then, Harry is *so* credulous. He says he really pities Simmons; but I'm sure I can't see why. It seems to me there is nothing very pitiable in being able to live in style and outshine everybody else in town; it would be more like the thing to pity *me* for having to do without that new silk. I know if I had all of Mrs. Simmons's finery I wouldn't consider myself an object of pity. I heard,

some time ago, their house was mortgaged for all it is worth; but so long as they can live in it and enjoy it, I shouldn't think it would make any difference if there were a hundred mortgages on it.

It isn't a very hard matter to fail in business if you can keep a fine home and all your valuables, as Colonel Grabb did when he broke up. They claim he isn't worth a dollar; and yet he still owns his thousand-dollar piano and splendid furniture, and his family dress just as much as ever. I can't understand how they can keep up so well if he is bankrupt and can't own anything any more! Harry thinks he's a regular old rascal, who is living at ease on the hard earnings of widows and poor people whom he has defrauded, and that if justice had been done he would now be serving out a term in the State's Prison, just as much as the commonest thief. Harry certainly must be prejudiced against the colonel, for if people believed him to be such an unprincipled man they wouldn't receive him into the best society, as they do, and treat him as an equal, much less be so obsequious and act as if it were a great honor to be invited to his wine suppers.

Harry says society is all wrong on this point; that while Christian people uphold the rich man who proves himself a successful scoundrel, paying him deferential attentions and feeling exalted by his notice, just so long will there be a premium on rascality and dishonesty; and, too, that just so long as the

mania continues which seems to have taken possession of the American people,—the mania for making a show and living in a style beyond their means,—just so long will men be tempted and led into dishonesty and crime.

Goodness! What a crowd of people in front of Simmons's house! they are carrying somebody up the steps. Perhaps Mr. Simmons is sick, and they have brought him home; but 'tis strange they didn't put him in a carriage, and not have so many persons crowding around. Oh! there's blood! What *is* the matter?

"Suicide, by cutting his throat," did you say? Horrible! horrible! Then he *did* tell Harry the truth, after all. Poor man! gone to his last account! And his wife,—how I *pity her!*

HELPMEETS.

We believe the number of wives who are dead weights on a husband's energies (and, Heaven be praised, the number is small, compared with that great army of helpful, courageous women who silently bear their share, and often more than their share, of the burden in the world's conflicts),—we repeat, we believe the number would be far less were parents more willing to give their girls an equal chance with their sons in the preparation for an active life.

By the time a boy is fourteen, if he has a thrifty father, plans have been already laid for his future; at least, he knows it is expected of him that he must make his own living when he is older, and he is encouraged in every possible way if he early exhibits any desire for money-getting. But we hear of no like plans or schemes for the daughter of the family; no opportunities are given *her* for trading, and buying, and selling, such as are afforded her brother; no glow of satisfaction and parental pride at the shrewdness she sometimes displays in her childish bargains with her playmates. Rather, she is laughed at and

scolded for possessing a mercenary spirit, and is reminded that such transactions are only for boys,—she is a girl, and that makes all the difference in the world.

And so, being a girl, poor thing! and having been fettered from her very babyhood, is it any wonder she grows to woman's estate with no idea other than that she must be petted, and cared for, and provided for all the rest of her days, as she has been in the past? She has always been a dependant on her father or her brothers; they have furnished the means for her to dress and look pretty; and now she is expected to marry a husband who will continue to do the same. He must make the money,—she will do the spending. What could be more logical?

We need not infer from this that she has been extravagant and wasteful in her girlhood days; that she had only to "ask papa or the boys" for the needed cash to spend in finery, and it was promptly forthcoming. On the contrary, it is altogether probable it was doled out to her most reluctantly; that she had to skimp, and pinch, and turn her dresses wrong side out and upside down, to a painful degree, to make her wardrobe look as well as other girls'; but yet, stinted and restricted as she may have been, the feeling of helplessness and the habit of looking to some masculine arm for support have grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength. Her natural business qualifications may have been equal or superior to those of her brother, yet we find them on

the threshold of life with widely different prospects. He, self-reliant, pushing, and energetic, is already laying the foundation of a successful business career, while she works her superfluous energy into crocheted worsted dogs, and marvellous heaps of Java canvas, and waits for the coming man to put in an appearance; in fact, so tired is she of the monotony of this humdrum life, that not unfrequently she meets the aforesaid man more than half-way! Her life, however, is as humdrum and commonplace as before; matrimony has been simply a transfer of her millinery bills from her father to her husband.

The law recognizes her as a sharer in the husband's estate,—virtually she is but a dependant and recipient of his bounty. He holds the purse-strings, and to him she must go for every cent of money she spends: for even a nickel to buy a pair of shoestrings she must ask him. She is thus always a dependant, never an equal partner,—always a drag, never a helper. Well is it for her peace of mind if her sensibilities are so blunted as not to feel the humiliation of such a position, for to a proud-spirited woman it is galling in the extreme. "But," argues one, "a true, loyal wife will have no such feeling of abasement and humiliation; she will recognize the fact that he is the natural provider, she the recipient. His strong arm was made to labor and battle for her, to shelter her from the storms of life, and keep her from contact with the cruel world."

Very pretty, sir! we answer. We believe we have heard the simile of the sturdy oak and the clinging vine before; but, although very nice in poetry, it cannot be carried too far with safety in real life. A wife can be so clinging as to encumber her husband; she can hang so tightly that for every step he takes forward she drags him two backward. She can be so pretty and helpless, so utterly unable to stand alone, so wholly dependent, and so charmingly impotent, that were he clogged with a ball and chain, or did he have the proverbial millstone hung about his neck, he could not more effectually be kept down, with no hope of rising and bettering his condition. Men do not need that kind of wives. Such girls are well enough in novels and love-stories, perhaps; but in this practical, work-a-day world men want *helpers*. They need self-poised, self-reliant, energetic women, with thinking brains, and hands willing to execute. They have no use for those clinging, helpless, confiding little darlings whose chief occupation is to take things easy, spend money they have had no hand in earning, and keep John's nose to the grindstone all his days. Do you suppose Wordsworth had such a wishy-washy creature in his mind when he pictured that "perfect woman, nobly planned, to warn, to comfort, and command"? Out upon the thought!

The remedy for this evil lies wholly with parents. Let them give their daughters an equal chance with their sons; find out their special talent, and cultivate

it; teach them to have an aim, an object other than getting a husband, and to put forth every energy to perfect themselves in what they have undertaken; and, our word for it, the habits of industry, of methodical regularity that have been developed by these years of drill and work, will make them all the better wives and helpmeets in a home.

THE HOUSEHOLD SLAVE.

OUGHT we to pity the weary, haggard-looking mothers of America, who manifest their devotion to their children by toiling early and late, ruffling and tucking and trimming their clothes, the object apparently being to make them look as little like children and as much like grown people as possible? At the risk of being thought cynical, we frankly admit *we* haven't a particle of sympathy for any woman who makes herself pale, old, and wrinkled before her time, working through long, weary afternoons, and sitting up at night, to put five or six rows of bias stuff around her little daughter's polonaise, when a plain blouse-waist would answer just as well, and be in much better taste for a school-dress than the much-trimmed polonaise and ruffled skirt; for the modern mother would hoot at the idea of leaving the skirt untrimmed; and so, with one hand on her aching back, she extends the frock at arm's length with the other, gazes at it admiringly, and decides that a ruche on the neck or down the front, or one more row of trimming around the sleeves, will improve it still further; then she goes at it again, and only pronounces

it finished when it is so crammed with trimming that there is no space for more, having just enough strength left to dress her little six-year old in it, who wiggles off like a peacock under full sail to show her new finery to her mates.

If you expostulate with her, and tell her she could have made four plain dresses in the time spent on this suit, ten to one she will agree with you that it is a great tax on her strength and time, but will offer at the same time, in extenuation of her folly, the plea that one might as well make children's clothing fashionable while one is about it, as to have them look a hundred years behind the times; and so she keeps on braiding and biasing—growing gray over ruffling and "knife-plaiting"—stitching into trimming all the roses off her cheeks; her spine curved and in a chronic state of coming to pieces; and every time she looks in the glass she sees herself reflected there so peaked and wan, so faded and yellow, that she wonders if there ever was a time when she was young. Meanwhile, the world looks on admiringly at the brood of nicely-dressed little ones whom the fond parent sends from her door to school every morning, and, seeing the ruffled overskirts, the sleeveless jackets, and kilt plaitings, renders the verdict of "such a good mother—so devoted to her children!"—forgetting that in every garment thus needlessly decorated her "devotion" may have cost her, mayhap, years of her life.

Do you know such a woman? Her name is legion! She may be your next-door neighbor; in fact, in the same house with you, bearing your own name, and a very marked resemblance to yourself, for aught we know; but you'd recognize her if you met her in Jericho. She always has such "stacks" of sewing on hand that she can't take time to read; if she has a new frock to make for one of her little girls, you see her hunting over the fashion-plates in the "Lady's Book" to find out what is the "very latest," and she puts her whole unreserved intellect to the search for suitable trimmings. She can tell you to a dot how much Hamburg embroidery is needed to make a child's dress presentable, volunteers valuable information regarding the newest styles in sashes and yokes, and quotes "The Book" so glibly that it makes you feel quite abashed in the presence of such superior knowledge.

She is not rich; if she were she might keep her roses and youthful looks by hiring others to "fresco" her children's clothing; but it is usually among those of small means that this practice most obtains. We know a lady, the wife of a clerk, whose salary is barely sufficient to pay house-rent and keep his family,—certainly not enough to lay up a penny for a "rainy day,"—who was making up her children's summer clothing when we called on her not many weeks ago. She was ill, and thought perhaps she had "overdone" herself, and she showed us some

dresses she had just completed for her three little girls. There they were! jackets and overskirts, polonaises and basques, bedizened with edgings and ruffles, and the inevitable bias piece on each ruffle! Now, in our opinion, that woman ought to be sick. She deserves to grow old and ugly, and stoop-shouldered and lean, and do what she is surely trying to do; that is, give her children the best chance in the world to have a step-mother.

We appeal to women of sense to know whether such frittering away of time and strength be commendable or condemnable. Which? These were only school-dresses, remember,—dresses to be put on and worn, and put in the wash every Monday, and perspired over at the ironing-board every Tuesday.

But, says one, perhaps the æsthetical element in that woman's nature, smothered down by poverty at every other point, only finds vent and expression in adorning and making her children's clothes pretty. Pretty! *Cela dépend!* Better, perhaps, smother it on that point, and it may be able to crop out somewhere else.

We like pretty things, too; we confess to a weakness for nice laces and handsome embroideries, dainty cambrics and fine dimities; but our "æsthetic" tastes wouldn't impel us to trim our daughters' clothing so elaborately as to be a dread to the laundress. Every woman who has the "worry" and care of a husband and a family of children has sufficient

strain on her nerves and temper, without this additional labor; and the weary hours given to the elaboration of her children's clothing are just so much of the vitalizing power taken from her life's blood.

And, aside from all these considerations, who will know or care ten years hence whether your child wore "cloth of frieze or cloth of gold"? A fresh pinafore, and a place on your knee listening to the "story" that children are always coaxing for, will make your little one happier and better than all the fashionable toggery you can put on him.

But work on, O mothers with the æsthetical element which cannot be repressed! Indulge your taste for the beautiful! Tuck and ruffle and stitch insertion in your little girl's pantalets; put tucks and flutings, straight, bias, and crosswise, on her petticoats; get faded and jaded ruffling her overskirts and polonaises; braid, and flounce, and furbelow every article she owns; but, for heaven's sake, don't put on a wan face and ask for sympathy!

SOME RIGHTS OF WOMEN.

THE majority of men profess to have but little faith in the efficiency and capability of women in conducting the business affairs of life. They will admit, perhaps, when they are pinned down to facts, that there are exceptional cases in which women have displayed equal capacity with themselves; but this modicum of praise is given so grudgingly that scarcely a hope can be entertained of breaking through the traditional crust in which they are encased, and instilling into them that liberality of thought which marks the progress of the ages. In what measure, or to what extent, they are right, and the rapidly swelling ranks of the advocates of the equality of the sexes are wrong; whether a woman under the most favorable circumstances is competent to manage a business involving hundreds of thousands of dollars; whether she possesses the fine mathematical brain which is needed to conduct such affairs safely through the breakers of a threatening financial crisis, we are not prepared to say. But we do know, and affirm, that in the ability requisite to direct and control the smaller affairs on which depend the comfort, and frequently the happi-

ness, of life, she is immeasurably man's superior. Now, don't nod your head encouragingly, and exclaim, "Exactly! Woman's sphere is home," etc.; meaning, by that cut-and-dried phrase, that her proper place is in the nursery, taking care of babies, or in the kitchen, preparing toothsome dishes for her lord's stomach! We do not mean this, for it has been conceded for ages, and is patent to every one, that woman's presence is the essential element of a home; but we refer to that portion of the household economy which usually falls under the supervision of man. Take, for instance, a smoky chimney. A woman endures it, because she thinks she must; she complains to "John" of the annoyance it causes her; she tells him it puts her out of humor, and makes her feel cross all the time, to have her eyes red, rimmed, and nearly blinded with the smoke. She sees her nice wall-paper and tinted ceiling being ruined day after day, and John feels sorry, and says he "will see about it;" and off he goes about his business, and never thinks of it again till the next meal, when soggy biscuit and half-cooked steak are forcible reminders that the chimney won't draw. Why, then, you ask, does she not engage a workman herself, and have the thing remedied at once? Simply because it isn't customary for women to do such things, and it would look out of place for a woman who has a husband to be running around hunting up stonemasons and talking of the price of brick; and because, too, John will

most probably tell her she has enough to do to take care of her house and children, and, if she will only be reasonable, he will attend to the matter himself as soon as he gets time. This last is generally intended for a "settler," and it settles her so effectually that she goes on waiting, and growing crosser and more blear-eyed every hour the matter is delayed! Now, think what a saving of both temper and wall-paper if she were untrammelled and free to act as she deemed best in such matters. We wouldn't see back gates hanging by one hinge, or door-knobs that won't turn, or leaky cisterns standing empty from March till October, waiting to be repaired, while rain-water in that household is as precious as otto of roses, if woman had the power vested in her which man assumes as his peculiar privilege. If given the opportunity, she would soon show him that in her *rôle* of employer, and competency to judge of the merits of a piece of work, she was quite his equal. She wouldn't be found supinely sucking her thumbs, waiting for weeks on the sluggish movements of a workman who has promised jobs to as many other people at the same time. She knows, better than any man, the vexations and jars in the domestic machinery caused by the dawdling slip-and-go-easy way that the average husband has of procrastinating in such matters. She knows, if he does not, that Bridget's fit of dumps and threats to leave are half the time owing to these inconveniences and the extra labor they involve,—in-

conveniences that seem to him so small as not to be worth speaking of. Probably it would not hurt *him* to stride over a broken step, or a rickety pair of cellar stairs, once in a while; therefore it doesn't occur to him that a woman will grow bony and weak-kneed from climbing them ten or fifteen times a day for three hundred and sixty-five consecutive days. It is true, if he is at all observing, he will notice that she "gives out" easily, and is a trifle thin, and he accordingly invests a few dollars in somebody's celebrated blood purifier, instead of getting the cellar steps mended. Then, again, if housewives had the control of those matters legitimately belonging to them, of one thing you might be sure,—they would never hire a laborer to work for them the second time who had once disappointed them or done his work in a bungling, unsatisfactory manner. Men look over and forget such things; but, as a rule, women never do. They will remember against the carpenter the long weeks of repeated disappointments after he had engaged to make the garden fence, and they indignantly treasure up the glibly-made and quickly-broken promises of the man who was paid in advance to clean the yard, resolving, henceforth, that he can never be employed by them.

Oh! the discords often engendered between husband and wife; the heart-burnings, growing out of such seemingly trivial matters; the ill-feeling, where all should be love and harmony; the little nameless,

but wearing, trials of patience; ay! the tears, the bitter, angry tears, that would be saved in a household managed after this better plan, would surely compensate a husband for what he regards as an infringement of the divine right of man!

FRENCHIFYING.

NOTHING so forcibly strikes the ordinary newspaper or magazine reader in these latter years of our Lord, as the number of French words and phrases with which the modern writer interlards his every sentence. A few words of English, interlaid with a dash of French, to add piquancy and vivacity, as well as to display his profundity, and he has an article that resembles a printed sandwich,—a layer about of each, —a tempting, palatable sandwich, from which the educated, appreciative reader can nibble off choice titbits to his heart's content.

"'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true," that they whose early education has been so sadly neglected that they have never at school gone through those thrilling exercises which have immortalized Messrs. Ollendorf and Fasquelle, beginning with, "*Je suis. Tu es. Il est,*" etc., etc.,—we repeat, 'tis pity that they should be debarred from this literary feast or merely guess at the meaning while being obliged to "skip" every third word. We deplore the uncultivated, vitiated taste of the persons who condemn a book as not being interesting, simply

because they can't translate the few hundred French words it contains. What absurdity!

Do they expect a writer to employ our own plain, bald, homely, unvarnished Anglo-Saxon to express his ideas, when he has a whole treasury of French idioms to draw from? Why cannot they learn that it is more refined to write *gant-de-chevreau* than "kid glove," and *chapeau* instead of "hat"? or who would be so commonplace as to wish to stick to the word "master-piece," when he can say *chef-d'œuvre?* Only think how much more elegant it is to say that you moved with *empressement*, than that you were eager or earnest; that you look *distinguê*, rather than genteel! And the literati of the entire civilized world will bear us out in saying that the old fogy who prefers the word "mistake" to *faux-pas*, or "disappointment" to *contre-temps*, deserves to be gibbeted!

How greatly would it soften the pangs of the lover who has been discarded by his mistress and passes from her presence a heart-broken man, if, instead of the tame, spiritless "She has rejected me," he would roll his eyes tragically towards heaven, and, with clasped hands, murmur, "*Mon oie est cuite!*"

A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but *dindon à la broche* with *sauce Robert* or sauce *aux câpres* always tastes better and has a richer flavor than plain roast turkey with onion sauce. And we confess, while contemplating the bill of fare at a fash-

ionable hotel, we scarcely know which to admire most,—the delicacy of the cake gotten up *à la* General Grant, and the pudding *à la* somebody else, or the mental fecundity of the pastry-cook who displays such an extraordinary sense of what is appropriate in naming his dishes.

Of course, even to the initiated reader there will frequently occur in the same column such a bewildering list of *chic*, *cheveux*, *frou-frous*, and heaven only knows what else, as slightly to stagger his faculties and upset his equilibrium. But he reads serenely on, wisely taking it for granted that it is all right, as the words are italicized and are not in his mother-tongue.

The proverbial inventive faculty of the Yankee nation is equal to anything, from the manufacture of wooden nutmegs to the contriving and perfecting of complicated machinery; but in the mighty matters of the toilet we are found wanting, and the glory of our wardrobes belongs not to us, but to another. The power that governs the styles of dresses, gloves, cloaks, coats, and bonnets, for republican America, lies beyond the ocean.

How fitting, then, that the people from whom we borrow rules as to what we shall wear and as to how we shall wear it, should also furnish us with a language more ornate and elegant than our own!

WOMEN AS TALKERS.

ARE men naturally better conversers than women? or is it, as an able Western writer has affirmed, because the things women habitually talk about when alone together are clothes, gossip, housekeeping, and bodily ailments?

There is, we fear, more honesty than politeness in the assertion. Yet, however humiliating it may be to feminine vanity to make such an acknowledgment, the experience of the great majority of the "softer sex" is, that an hour's talk with almost any man of ordinary intelligence and education is usually more profitable, and contains more things worth remembering, than a whole day spent in chat with the average woman, though she be the possessor of a diploma from one of our "first" seminaries.

Men in general act upon the idea that they cannot be entertaining or agreeable to ladies except they talk nonsense and "small talk." They may, among themselves, be enjoying rich interchange of thought, pouring out for one another the "hived honey of the mind," when two or three women approach the circle. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, lo! the theme changes, and the conversation flattens down

to the dead level of the commonplace! To bring the talk within the compass of the feminine mind, the weather, one another's rheumatism or neuralgia, and kindred topics, are now discussed, and thus is frittered away on vapid nothings a whole evening that might have been edifying and delightful.

Such men must be poor, narrow-souled creatures, after all, notwithstanding their culture, to shut up themselves and their learning like an oyster in its shell, unwilling to see that woman "is not bred so dull but she can learn;" unwilling even to attempt to lift her mind out of its contracted channel to the higher plane on which they themselves stand. Such selfishness is unpardonable.

If they had tried and failed; if they had found women wedded to their idols, refusing to be elevated above "clothes, gossip, and bodily ailments," then, but not till then, could they consistently censure them and withhold from them the benefits of a cultured conversation. Perhaps, like Luther, these gentlemen think "there is no gown or garment that worse becomes a woman than when she will be wise."

If such really were his sentiments, we can't help thinking how the good old doctor's soul would have warmed towards the average woman of the present generation! How it would have gladdened his heart to witness her puzzled stare when he mentioned Zwingle or Melanchthon! With what intense delight would he have chuckled to watch her turn contemptuously

away from such themes as the causes of the Reformation, for an afternoon's animated discussion with a lady friend on the relative merits of Breton trimmings or furbelowed "Princess" dresses!

Now, we do not believe that women are so inferior to men as their own conduct would indicate; but before they accuse mankind of condemning them unjustly, they must give some evidence in their intercourse between themselves that they have ideas better worth talking about than fashions or the latest figure in the "German."

Women read, but they rarely discuss and talk over with one another what they read. They meet, probably every week, some acquaintance who has "sucked the sweetness of the same authors" whose beauties have held them spell-bound in solitude and of whom they could talk long and lovingly together, yet they are as silent as the grave on the subject. They know a little of the political situation in France, also that there is a war raging in the East, but they have no questions to ask, no conjectures to venture, no opinions to give. One of our own countrywomen, Madame Patterson-Bonaparte, testified to this conversational poverty when she wrote to a friend in France that there was no such thing as society in this country; no one could talk; the men knew nothing beyond their business, while the women were engrossed with their households and their babies.

(In justice to American women, we may add that

this criticism is a half-century old, and were it to be made to-day, the last word of the sentence would probably have a widely different rendering.)

Is it because women are afraid of betraying to one another that they have ideas, intelligence, brains, that they are thus reticent? Look at the difference between a man with his fellows and a woman with women in this particular. If he has anything to say, he dashes into the matter at once,—cracks the nut and enjoys the kernel with his associates; she wastes the precious moments in civilities and commonplaces, and goes away conscious that she has neither gained nor given out a single idea.

When we reflect that a fine talker may be queen of the social circle if she will, it is singular that there is not more effort made by women to excel in this respect. We can all witness to the fact that even those aggravating people who invariably harp on the weather, and disgust one by ringing the changes of all their personal aches and pains, will eagerly crowd around to listen to a person who keeps his liver complaint and "Old Probabilities" out of sight, and talks of something instructive or amusing.

Madame de Staël, it is said, had the power of talking herself into a beauty; and of the gifted Quakeress Mrs. Knowles we are told that her charming conversation made one forget both her slovenly dress and her ugly face. We may be sure these ladies did not render themselves thus captivating and sought after

by the most brilliant scholars of their time by taking for topics of conversation their troubles with their servant-girls, the latest styles in overskirts, or speculations regarding their neighbors' private affairs.

Fancy the authors, statesmen, and clever politicians of that day listening entranced to the dawdling *persiflage* common among our best classes!

THE END.

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